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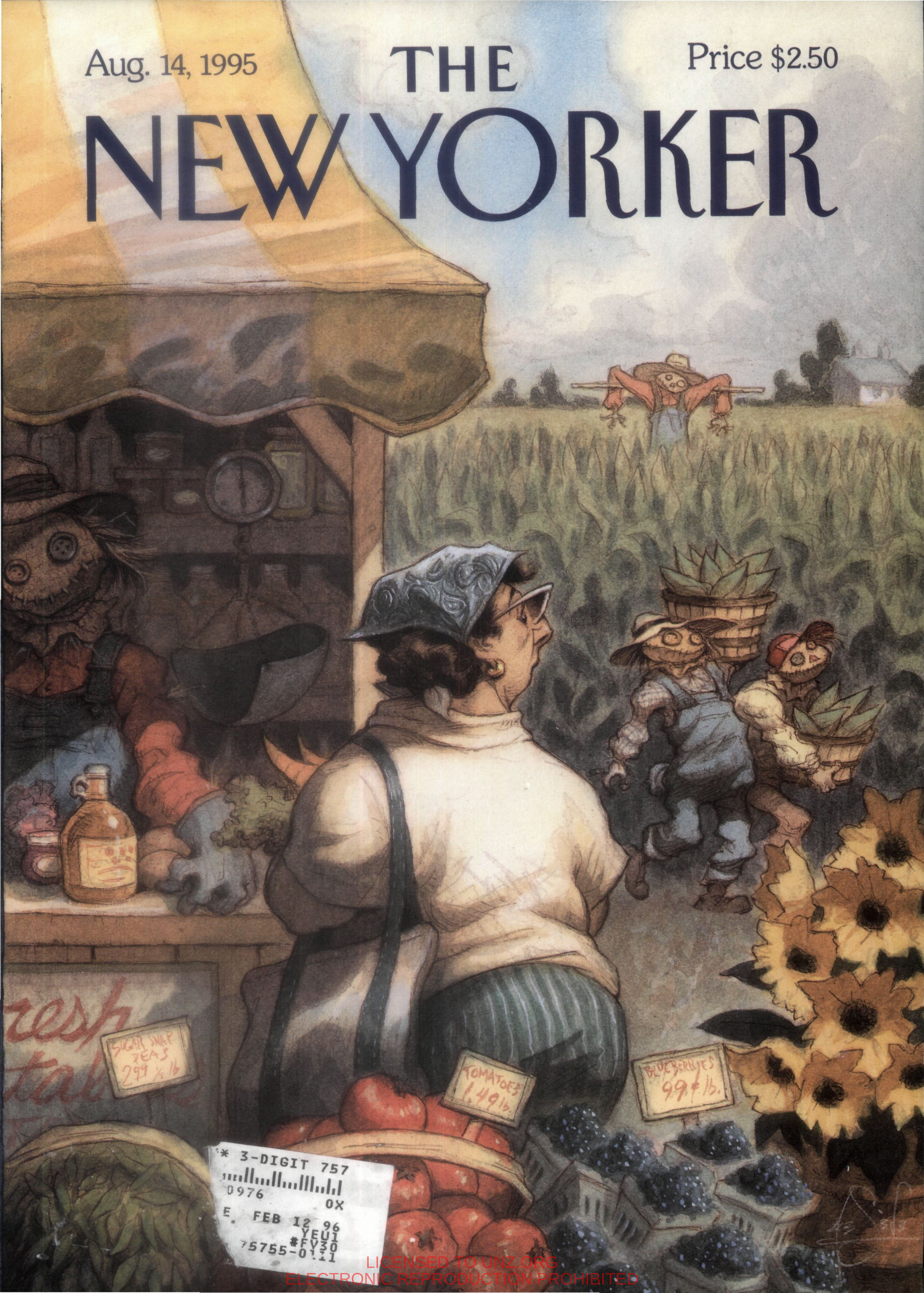
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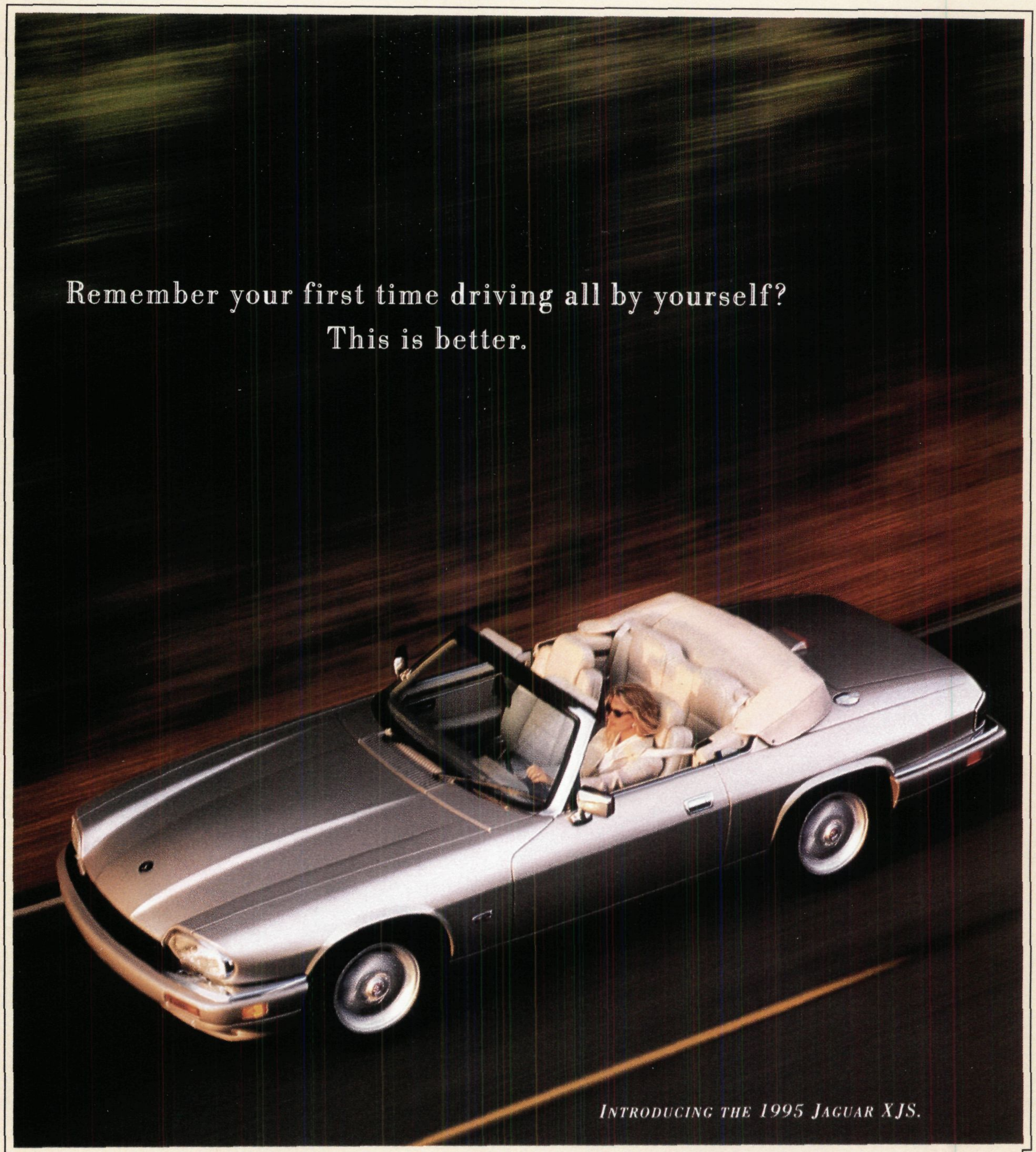
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AUGUST 14, 1995

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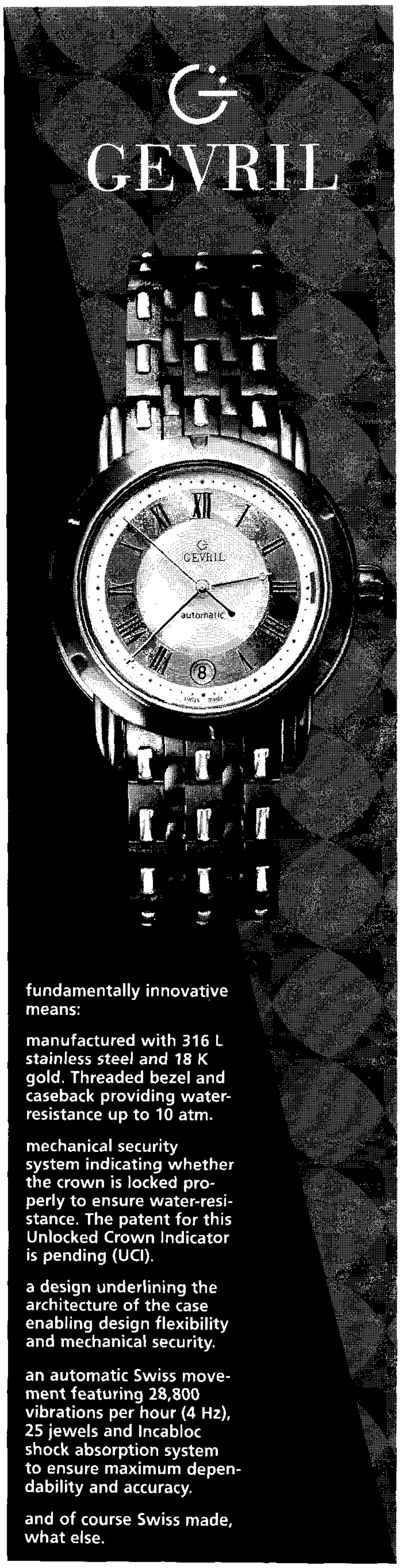

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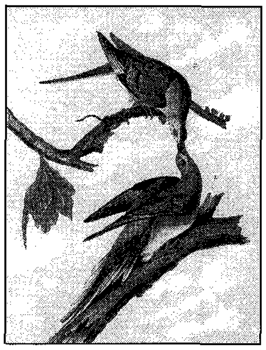

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COMMENT

E PLURIBUS UNABOMBER

There's a little of him in us all.

NED LUDD—the mysterious and probably mythical leader of the rebellion that shook the North of England in 1811 and 1812—would have understood the Unabomber. In Ludd's name, masked bands of cottage hand weavers and combers rose up against the new machines that were displacing them; they smashed power looms and burned down textile mills. The authorities retaliated by making the destruction of machinery a capital crime. By 1813, twenty-four of the Luddites, as they came to be called, had been hanged.

The Unabomber combines the views of the Luddites with the cruelty of their repressers: to him, industrialism is not only an offense but an offense punishable by death. Since 1978, in sixteen incidents, he has killed three people, and injured twenty-three. The Unabomber says, grandiosely, that his aim is to destroy high-technology industrialism by terrorizing its leading agents—particularly the scientists and engineers who are indispensable to it—and, ultimately, to bring about a return to a civilization of "small, autonomous communities." In his manifesto, excerpts from which appeared last week in the *Times* and the Washington *Post*, he writes that industrial society has damaged nature, generated numerous social pathologies, and robbed people of dignity, autonomy, and power over their lives while manipulating their behavior to make them consent to their enslavement. It's an utterly one-sided picture but not an altogether inaccurate one.

The Unabomber is thought to be a solitary terrorist, but he is not alone in his dissatisfaction with industrial society. There has long been a kind of Unabomber strain in the West's ambivalence about the science and technology that have given it so much of its power. The Enlightenment welcomed science for its promise of liberation from superstition and want. For a growing number of educated people during the century and a half following the Luddite rebellion, however, the promise soured. Though the Promethean power of the machine had its enthusiasts, of course, critics indicted it for producing not only

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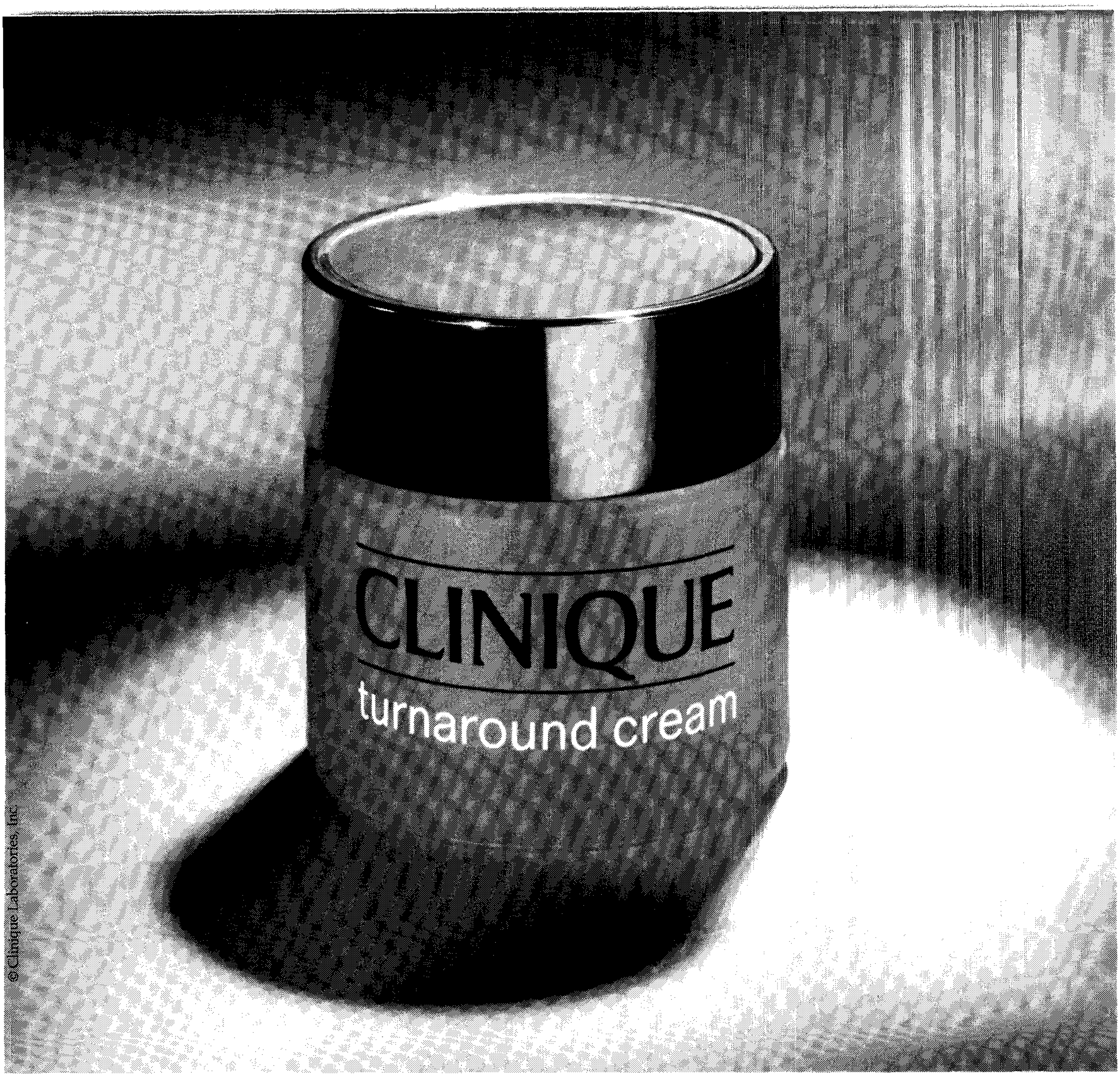

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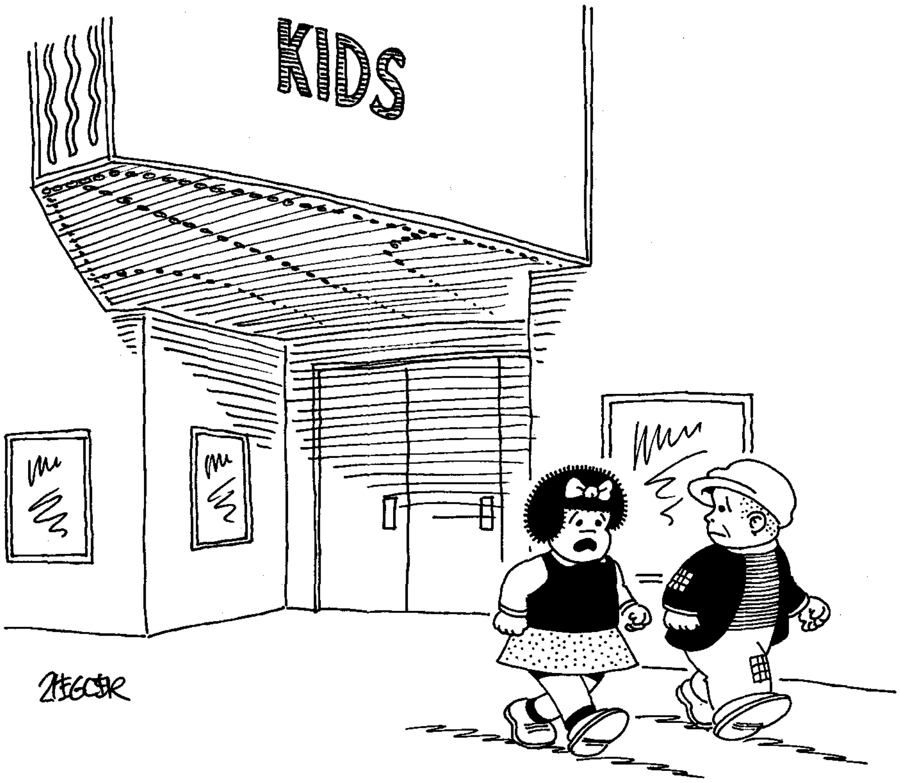


"Yikes!"

• •

technological unemployment but also the depersonalization and regimentation of work, the despoliation of nature, and, finally, the indiscriminate slaughter of total war.

All those things were mainly consequences of the exploitation of physics and chemistry, but since the nineteen-seventies the indictment has been widened to encompass the technologies of information and of life, including the cutting-edge fields of computer science and molecular genetics. Technology is now blamed not only for its dramatic disasters—Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, Bhopal and the Exxon Valdez—but also for the insidious, alienating replacement of conversation and community by television-watching and net-surfing. In "Rebels Against the Future," a recent book celebrating the Luddites, Kirkpatrick Sale, a respected environmentalist and historian, decries computers in words the Unabomber might admire: "It is the computer and those who feed and handle it who reign supreme," for "control of information is control of power." In a half-dozen public forums, Sale has turned conviction into performance art by sledgehammering a computer to pieces.

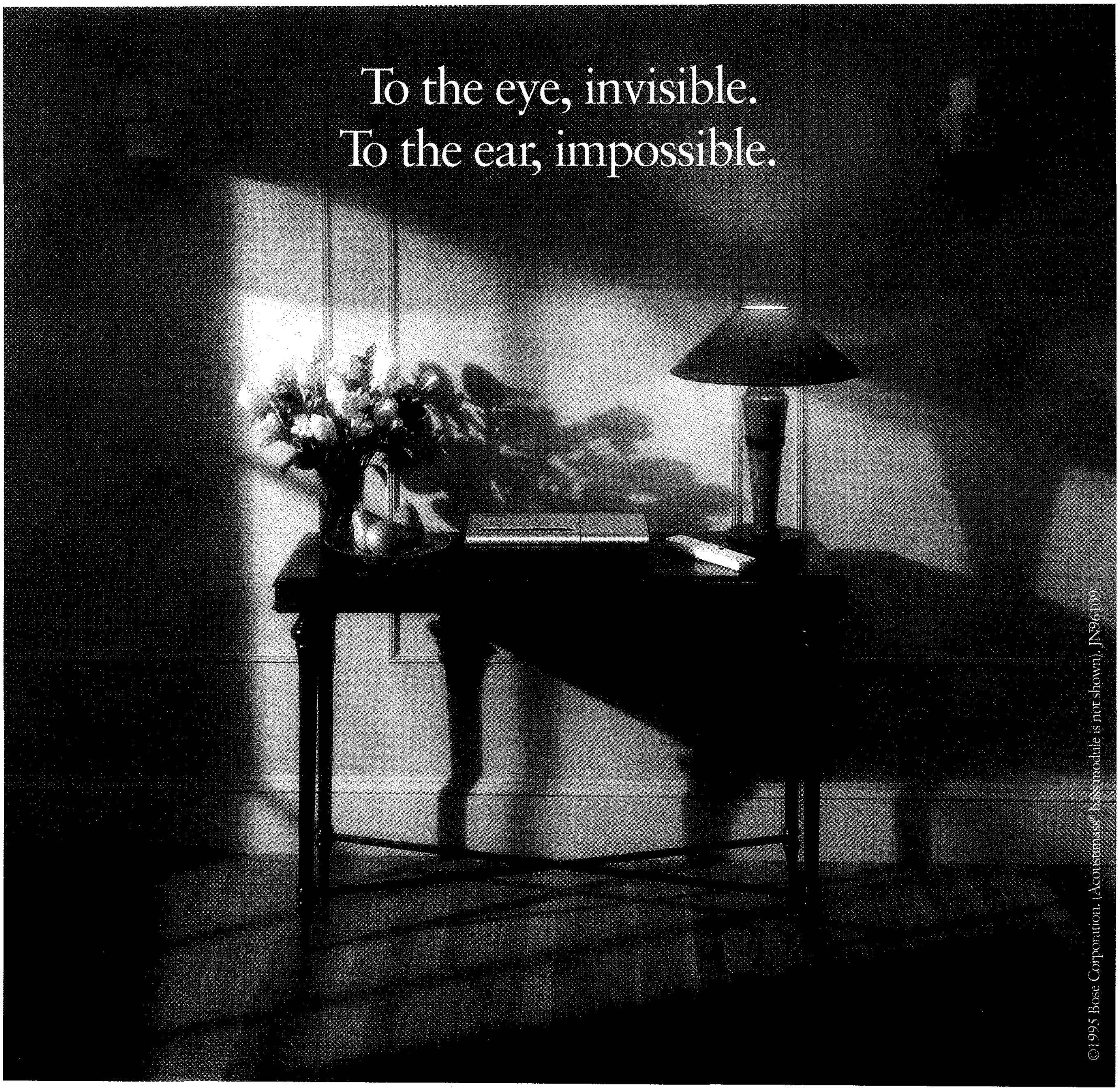
And the accelerating revolution in the biomedical sciences has drawn similar attacks from many quarters. Jeremy Rifkin's books and lectures condemn what he sees as a desacralization of life resulting from the exploitation of genetic science by commercial biotechnology. There are religious leaders who assail the manipulation of genes as an exercise in hubris against the order of God's universe, feminists who attack the new reproductive technologies as turning women into mere babymaking machines, and animal-rights activists who trash biomedical research laboratories and oppose the use of organs from animals for human transplants, as when a group chanted at a transplant center in Pittsburgh, "Animals are not spare parts!"

Neo-Luddism of this kind is essentially an élite phenomenon, but, as a glance at the summer's most popular movies suggests, the audience for its echoes is large. In "Waterworld," technological folly melts the polar ice caps, and outlaws on gas-guzzling jet skis menace the floating survivors. In "Apollo 13," old-fashioned grit and ingenuity save astronauts marooned by high-tech failure. In "The Net," computer networks become an instrument of evil. And in "Pocahontas" a child of nature does her best to enlighten the technologically superior but morally inferior English colonists.

The critique of high-technology industrial civilization appeals to almost all of us in one way or another, but that doesn't keep us from hungering for scientific marvels. The recent announcement by Amgen, Inc., that it had come up with an anti-obesity hormone using a gene extracted from mutant mice produced a deluge of telephone inquiries; many of the callers offered themselves for clinical trials. One person's technological outrage is another's miraculous salvation. "Do you know what it's like to have liver disease? Do you?" a hepatitis patient shouted at the animal-rights protesters in Pittsburgh, momentarily silencing them. Neo-Luddism's sympathizers—a group that includes some of us all of the time and all of us some of the time—tend to be selective about disliking technology and its byproducts. Many a macrobiotic couple has spent thousands of dollars to conceive in a test tube, the airports are crowded with people trying to get to the wide-open spaces, and the folksinger who declines to release his environmental ballads on compact disk and cassette is a rare bird indeed.

In the end, few of us are likely to generalize our particular aversions into the Unabomber's proclaimed preference for the pre-industrial past. Stripped of the gauzy romanticism of myth, the pre-industrial village was for most people a place of exhausting and unremitting subsistence labor, harnessing men, women, and children to the mind-numbing tasks of farm and household. It subjected most of its inhabitants to local prejudices, enforced ignorance, and arbitrary power, while leaving them vulnerable to devastating diseases and early death. For all our ambivalence about high-technology industrialism, most of us don't want to live in a society like that. Maybe the Unabomber—who is so desperate to have his screeds digitally type-set and printed on the high-speed, forest-fed, electric-powered presses of major newspapers that he is willing to kill for it—doesn't really want to, either.

—DANIEL J. KEVLES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IN THE MAIL

HUCK, TWAIN, AND RACE

I was surprised by E. L. Doctorow’s comment (in “Huck, Continued,” June 26th / July 3rd) that “to render everything completely pointless it turns out that Jim has been freed legally . . . as Tom has known all along.” I have always believed that Tom’s denial of Jim’s freedom is exactly the point: the history of our nation shows that for its own selfish purposes the majority, like Tom, has refused to acknowledge black Americans’ moral and legal rights to freedom. And Huck, who acquiesces in Tom’s drawn-out plan to free Jim instead of insisting that Jim be given his rights directly and immediately, is complicitous, just as many of us are complicitous in similar betrayals today.

David S. Schwartz
Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.

Is racism present in “Huckleberry Finn”? Abundantly. Take Huck’s father’s encounter with the “free nigger . . . from Ohio”—who happens to be a college professor. Pap is shocked to learn that this man is allowed to vote in his home state. “It was ’lection day, and I was just about to go and vote, myself, if I warn’t too drunk to get there,” he says, “but when they told me there was a State in this country where they’d let that nigger vote, I drawed out. I says I’ll never vote agin.”

But can anyone possibly believe that this ignorant diatribe by a drunken reprobate reflects Twain’s sentiments? Twain regarded himself as a teacher and a moralist, and “Huckleberry Finn” is, in fact, profoundly antiracist. How could a writer accurately depict racism without faithfully reproducing its language? Would you delete the word “kike” from the vocabulary of an anti-Semite?

Patrick L. Halley
Bella Vista, Ariz.

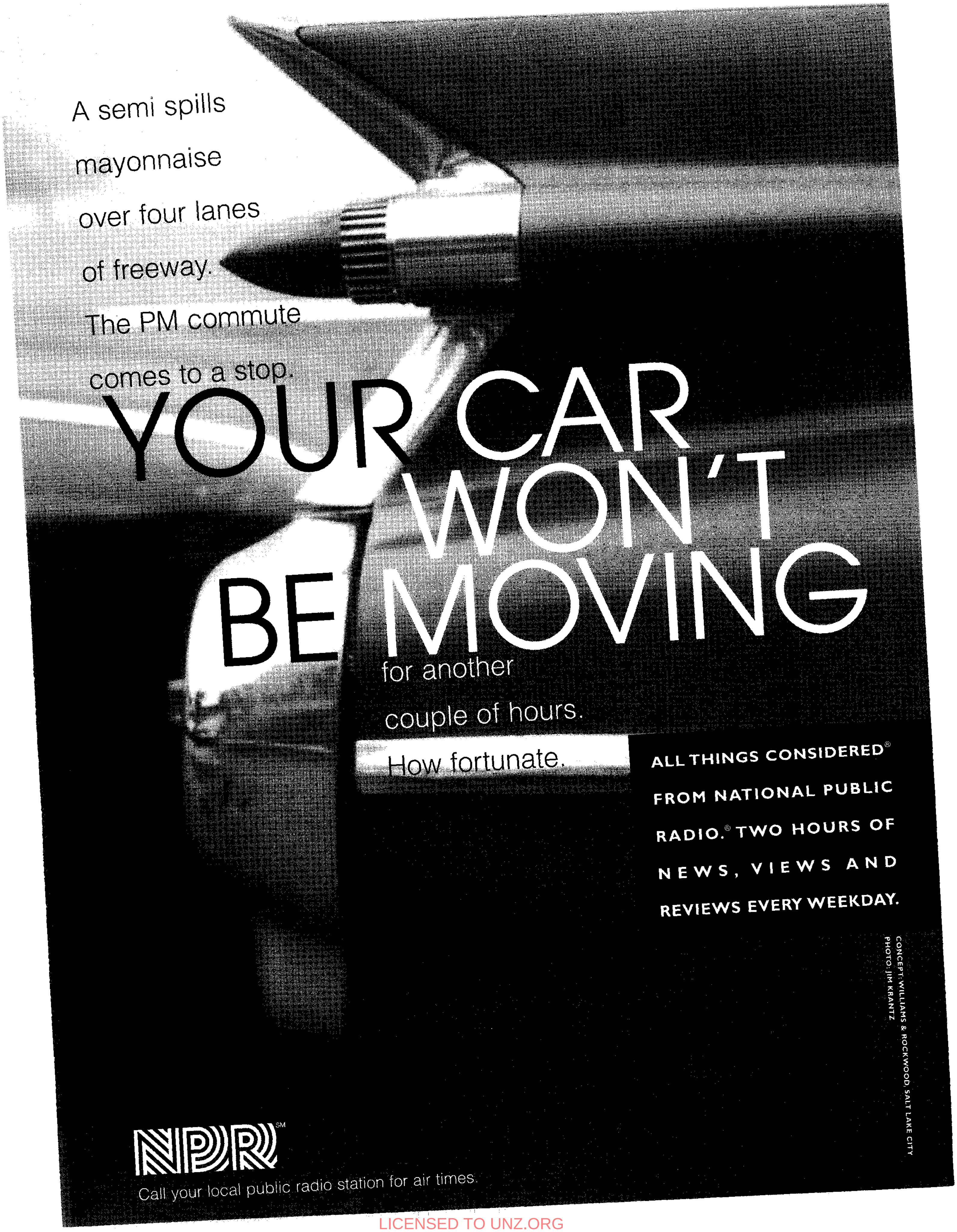
I am a graduate student at the City University of New York, and I believe that I can suggest a possible source for the Twain excerpt “Jim and the Dead Man”: a minstrel sketch by Frank Dumont called “One Night in a Medical College.” The sketch was presented in April of 1876 in Hartford, Connecticut, Twain’s home town, by a professional minstrel troupe; this is the period just before Twain started writing “Huckleberry Finn.” There seem to be fairly clear similarities of plot and theme in both works, and although no documentary evidence has yet been found of Twain seeing this particular production, he was a great fan of minstrel shows in general. The convergence of these two texts provides support for analyses of Jim’s character that view his gullibility and superstition as minstrel-show tropes. It also highlights the ways in which both the minstrel show and white literature serve as repositories for mongrelized African-American folkways—in this case, documenting the very real fears blacks of the period had of night doctors, white-sheeted “ghosts,” and naked corpses.

Vicky Raab
New York City

ROUGH TRADE

Editors’ Note: A mistake made by a transcription service mangled a quotation from William Bennett in Michael Kelly’s July 17th Letter from Washington. In criticizing the political views of Patrick Buchanan, Mr. Bennett said “it’s a real us-and-them kind of thing,” not, as we reported, “it’s a real S & M kind of thing.”

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer’s name, address, and daytime phone number to “In the Mail,” The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.



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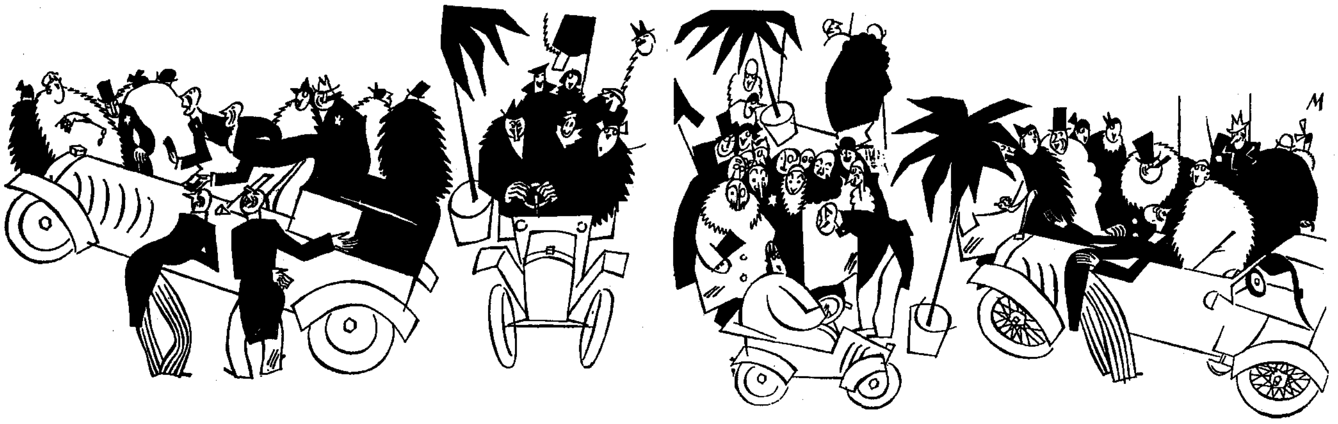

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

New to the Goo

"Blue Man Group / Tubes," the Off Broadway interactive performance-art piece, has paid a price for its popularity. After spending more than thirteen hundred performances in thick masks of electric-blue greasepaint, banging away on steel drums and Day-Glo PVC pipes, splashing paint, exploring chaos theory, and sharing banquets of Twinkies, the three original Blue Men—Chris Wink, Matt Goldman, and Phil Stanton—were worn out. Last November they began holding auditions for a few new Blue Men. Exhaustion wasn't the only motive: in October, a new production opens in Boston.

It hasn't been easy. Actors have to meet very specific height and weight requirements, be able to stand up to the physical rigors of the show, and, of course, play the drums and fit comfortably into this odd, exclusive group. Only twelve have passed muster; Wink, Goldman, and Stanton are still appearing in the show at least once a week. So now the Blue Men are searching for a few Blue Women, too. The qualifications are the same: "We're not interested in making a statement about gender," Wink says; "even if we have a female in our cast, the show will be genderless." And as Michael Dahlen, one of the latest to join the ranks, has learned, being a Blue Man goes beyond having greasepaint in your arteries. "It's in my nostrils," he confides.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Caucasian Chalk Circle—The Ma-Yi Theatre Ensemble's production of Brecht's drama runs through Aug. 26. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 683-9772.)

Entremeses—Free outdoor performances of three of Cervantes' comic interludes, presented by the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre. In previews. Opens Aug. 10 at 6:30 in Hell's Kitchen Park (Tenth Ave. at 47th St.) and continues, with stops at various locations, through Aug. 27. In Spanish, with English synopses. (For more information, call 354-1293.)

The Food Chain—In this comedy by Nicky Silver, a call to a crisis hot line initiates a series of chases—wife after husband, mother after son, son after the object of his affection. In previews. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Time and the Wind—A revue that traces the course of three New York City romances. Music by Galt MacDermot ("Hair"). Direction by Louis Johnson. Opens Aug. 9 at 8. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-4324.)

Troilus and Cressida—The summer's second and final New York Shakespeare Festival production, directed by Mark Wing-Davey, stars Neal Huff and Elizabeth Marvel in the title roles, and features Stephen Spinella as Pandarus. In previews. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

OPENED RECENTLY

After-Play—Anne Meara's comedy, about two couples who get together for an after-theatre dinner, stars Ms. Meara, along with Barbara Barrie, Larry Keith, and Merwin Goldsmith. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/13/95.) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

Arcadia—Despite some casting glitches, the American première of Tom Stoppard's 1993 play, which shuttles between 1809 and the present, is an elegant production of an enormous theatrical feat. In a kind of intellectual mystery story, Stoppard provides the audience with the exhilarating illusion of omniscience, allowing us to solve a riddle of history from clues and connections that the characters, caught in time, do not see. Directed by Trevor Nunn. (4/17/95) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 27.)

Bonhoeffer 1945—A two-character play about the last days of the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was hanged by the Nazis for his complicity in a plot to assassinate Hitler. It is rare to see a work of the imagination about good and evil in which very little seems to be at stake, but that is what the playwright, D. Paul Thomas, has delivered. Mr. Thomas acts the title role, and Nicholas Hormann plays the German officer who interrogates him—yet another silver-haired charmer of a Nazi who loves classical music and cognac. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 279-4200. Closes Aug. 13.)

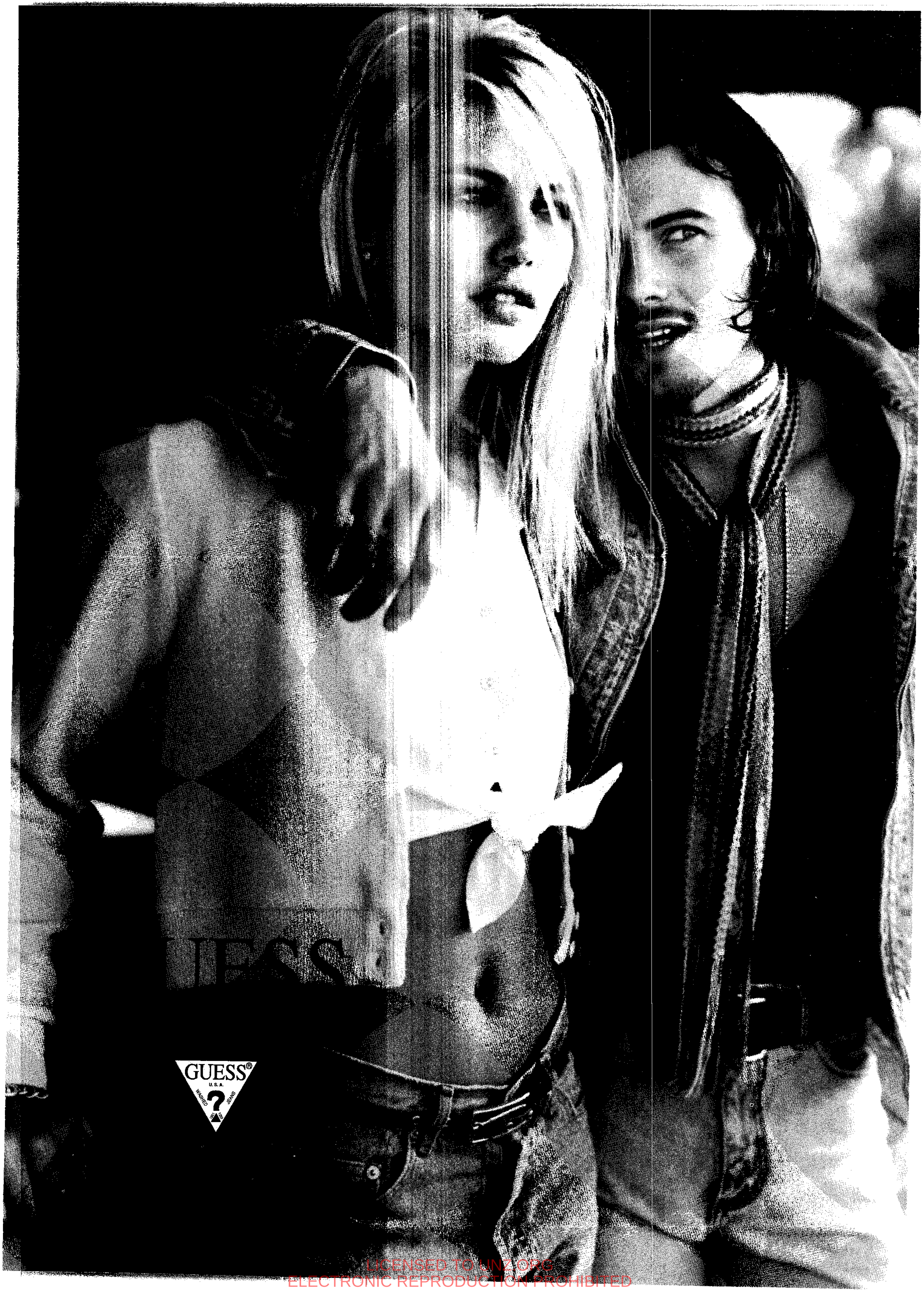
Death Defying Acts—Three subpar one-act comedies, by David Mamet, Elaine May, and Woody Allen, that have the words "Written to Order" stamped all over them. (3/20/95) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Ecstasy—Mike Leigh's play is set in a dismal North London flat in the winter of 1979; the late-seventies costumes and set are depressingly perfect, and the actors bring the six working-class characters to life with great specificity and vitality. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf—Ntozake Shange directed this twentieth-anniversary production of her consciousness-raising play about

"Pets!," at Theatre East.

CHRIS CURRY


UESS
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JEANS

black womanhood in America. It's still so fresh that after two decades it seems like it was written yesterday. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 279-4200. Closes Aug. 13 and reopens Aug. 16 at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center.)

Having Our Say—Sadie and Bessie Delany, two sisters who have passed the hundred-year mark, presented their vivid life stories in a 1993 best-seller; the book has been adapted beautifully from the page to the stage by Emily Mann, who also directed. Gloria Foster and Mary Alice are brilliant as the sisters, who were taught by their family to "reach high" despite the dogging of Jim Crow. (4/24/95) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Heiress—A revival of Ruth and Augustus Goetz's 1947 adaptation of Henry James's "Washington Square," directed by Gerald Gutierrez. Cherry Jones, who plays the title character, is exquisitely—almost unbearably—vulnerable. And the wonderful Frances Sternhagen is touching and funny as a widowed aunt. (3/20/95) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying—In this revival of Frank Loesser's 1961 musical, Matthew Broderick has polish and timing, but it's Lillias White's gospel solo in "Brotherhood of Man" that lifts the audience into a zone of joy. As a paradigm for the Broadway musical's con game—winning the public's heart while picking its pocket—her display of guile made glorious is as good as it gets. (4/24/95) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Hunger and Lightning—Kestutis Nakas performs his latest solo piece, about a physical and spiritual pilgrimage in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in New Mexico. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088. Closes Aug. 11.)

Indiscretions—The brightest spot in this production of Jean Cocteau's "Les Parents Terribles"—a dark comedy about the perversities of desire in family life—is Eileen Atkins, who plays a severely wise spinster with her usual magnetic minimalism. Kathleen Turner, as a hysterically possessive mother, is an unfocussed sprawl with a distractingly unplaceable accent. Roger Rees, Cynthia Nixon, and Jude Law also star, under the direction of Sean Mathias. (5/15/95) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

John & Jen—Andrew Lippa and Tom Greenwald's musical, which spans a forty-year period starting in 1951, explores problems of love and family through the relationships of a sister and a brother and, later on, the sister and her son. The book is often hackneyed and the music repetitive, though the lyrics possess an honest charm. Well staged by Gabriel Barre. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

London Suite—Neil Simon knows how to cater to his audience, but he's serving leftovers: these four one-acts are painfully dated in both their substance and their execution. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

Loving That Man of Mine—Van Dirk Fisher's musical comedy, set in a hip Harlem night club in the forties, scrutinizes the backstage goings on of a band of entertainers. (Riant, 161 Hudson St. 925-8353.)

Lust—With crotch-grabbing, bum-pinching, and plenty of exposed pantalets, this musical version of "The Country Wife" lacks the style and subtlety that made William Wycherley's Restoration play a definitive comedy of manners. But a dynamic cast, ornate costumes, and an attractive set enhance the tale. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

One Woman Shoe—The brother-and-sister writing team of David and Amy Sedaris bill themselves as the Talent Family, and it's a rare case of truth in advertising. In this encore production of their hysterical show, three clueless women are told by their social-services caseworker (played to Franklin Pangbornian perfection by David Rakoff) that they must put on one-woman shows in order to keep their benefit checks coming. The five cast members are all funny in a number of roles, but Ms. Sedaris, with her chipmunk's overbite and her remarkably plastic face, is extraordinary. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

The Only Thing Worse You Could Have Told Me . . .—Greg Louganis has taken over for Dan Butler, whose one-man show, a procession of characters from the real world of contemporary gay culture, is by turns hilarious, infuriating, sad, and uplifting—a charmer. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 307-4100.)

Party—In David Dillon's comedy, seven gay men get together to play a strip version of truth or dare, with terrifically funny (if occasionally didactic) results. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Pets!—Helen Butleroff, together with seventeen writers, composers, and lyricists and five engaging actors, has created the perfect theatrical beach novel, about people and their pets. The evening has its slow bits, but its charm and silliness consistently win out. How can you lose with a show in which a lovelorn iguana sings a tango? (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 307-4100.)

The Play's the Thing—This revival of Ferenc Molnár's clever confection lacks a spirit of farcical possibility—it's all leaden inevitability. Peter Frechette, as the egocentric playwright who manipulates the action onstage, excels at neurotic thoughtfulness, but he makes for a limp catalyst. The standouts are the sparky J. Smith-Cameron, playing a prima-donna actress, and Keith Reddin, as antic as ever as a sweaty factotum. Gloria Muzio directed; Stephan Olson designed the beautiful set—the Italian villa of your dreams—and, hands down, wins the award for Best Curtain of 1995. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Aug. 18.)

Rob Becker's Defending the Caveman—A hundred-minute standup routine. Some of Becker's examples of discontent between the sexes are very funny (a lot of vigorous nodding goes on in the theatre—never by men and women at the same time), but a fair number of them are shopworn. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—A feast of early rock and roll, performed by a cast with Grade A lungs and legs. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Sunset Boulevard—Betty Buckley takes on the monumental role of Norma Desmond. (12/5/94) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007.)

Swingtime Canteen—A re-creation of a 1944 U.S.O. concert, performed in a night club. Extraneous bits of plot threaten to derail the show, but the lovely songs, done with verve and charm, carry the day. Charles Busch donned drag again recently to join the show. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Sylvia—In A. R. Gurney's new comedy, Sarah Jessica Parker, as a dog named Sylvia, brings meaning to the life of a middle-aged currency trader (John Cunningham) while driving a canine-shaped wedge between him and his wife (Mariette Hartley). Parker has some funny moments, but this upper-middle-class fairy tale settles too soon into a monotonous sweetness; it lacks bite. John Tillinger directed. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind—The Neo-Futurists, a troupe from Chicago, perform thirty original two-minute plays in one hour. They change the program each night, and when there's a full house they order a pizza. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 330-8087.)

Travels with My Aunt—Giles Havergal, directing his own witty adaptation of Graham Greene's novel, has captured the book's amusingly puzzled tone with his playful, inventive (though overlong) staging. Four wildly different actors all play Henry Pulling, the staid retired banker whose eccentric Aunt Augusta drags him into her international adventures. Larry Linville doubles as Aunt Augusta, and the other three skillfully handle some twenty additional parts. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

2 Boys in a Bed on a Cold Winter's Night—James Edwin Parker's comic tale is about how not to behave during a one-night stand, but it's also a sharp-eyed exploration of emotional intimacy. Robert Gomes and Michael Curry make the grown-up boys sympathetic without being mushy. Directed by Thomas Caruso. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 279-4200.)

The Two Gentlemen of Verona—The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival production, set in upstate New York during the go-go days of the late nineteen-eighties, continues through Aug. 20. (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 1-914 265-9575.)

What You Said—The improv company Chicago City Limits presents a brand-new revue, featuring its ever-popular five-minute musical. (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP / TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **LOVE! VALOUR! COMPASSION!:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **THREE TALL WOMEN:** Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 26. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

DANCE

IN TOWN

Feld Ballets / NY—Aug. 9-10 and Aug. 14-15 at 8 and Aug. 12 at 2: "Harbinger," "Clave," "With Dew Upon Their Feet," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ Aug. 11-12 at 8: "The Grand Canon," "Ogive," "Chi," and "Ludwig Gambits." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Aug. 19.)

Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors—The monthlong series of free outdoor performances continues. Aug. 9 at 7:30: The narrative dancer Ione and the Njinga Players perform "Njinga the Queen King: Return of a Warrior." (Damrosch Park.) . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 8:15: The thirteen members of the Limón Dance Company appear in José Limón's "A Choreographic Offering," Doris Humphrey's "Day on Earth," and Phyllis Lamhut's "Fantômes." (Damrosch Park.) . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 5:30: Improvisational dancers from the downtown dance tank Movement Research present the premières of works by Simone Forti, Yvonne Meier, and Jeremy Nelson. (Fountain Plaza.)

Pilar Rioja—In her twenty-third New York season, the dancer performs solo in a range of traditional Spanish styles; expect canes, fans, footwork, skirt work, snapping fingers, and castanets. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Aug. 11 and Aug. 14-15 at 8, Aug. 12 at 3, and Aug. 13 at 7. Through Sept. 17.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—Aug. 9-10 at 8, Aug. 11 at 8:30, and Aug. 12 at 2 and 8:30: Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 7, Aug. 11 at 8, Aug. 12 at 5, and Aug. 13 at 7: Urban Bush Women, in "Bones and Ash: A Gilda Story." . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 8: Ballet British Columbia. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

Fire and Ice

In 1988, after a three-decade diet of English and American pop, the world got its first taste of Icelandic rock and roll. Born in the solar-heated clubs of Reykjavík, the Sugarcubes arrived on the scene fully formed with "Birthday," a nearly perfect slice of New Wave cake. The single also introduced listeners to the voice of Björk Gudmundsdóttir, a twenty-two-year-old elfin-faced dynamo who caterwauled through the track with such reckless passion that it sounded as if the midnight sun were the secret to eternal life. But five years later, the Sugarcubes were finished. Like so many of her British and American predecessors, Björk had ditched her band to go solo.

On August 14-15, the world's first Icelandic rock goddess arrives at the Academy to promote her second solo album, "Post" (her début was simply called "Début"). These days, Björk is a citizen of the world: she lives in London, records in the Bahamas, collaborates with big-ticket artists like Madonna (she co-wrote the music to "Bedtime Story"), and, as she recently told *Rolling Stone*, feels the influence of "people like Gabriel García Márquez and all those lot." But despite the occasional flash of brilliance, much of her solo work is as unfocussed as her voice is instantly identifiable. Sometimes it seems like she could use a hand from Siggi Baldursson and Einar Örn, her goofy old Sugarcube partners.

CONCERTS

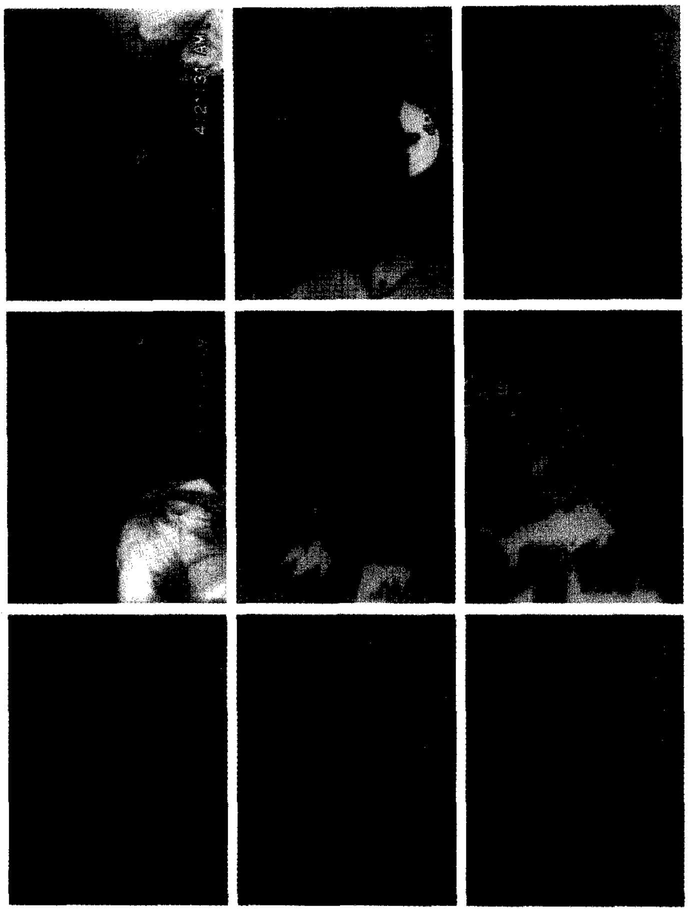
Allman Brothers Band—When they started out in 1969, the Allmans already seemed like a troop of battle-scarred veterans. Which is why, despite the periodic feuding, splinter groups, and devastating deaths, these grizzled midnight riders are still soldiering on. Before anyone unfurled the Southern-rock banner, the Allmans were juggling blues and jazz—two musical forms known for resilience. This gig finds them wrapping up yet another of their endless tours; the road does indeed go on forever. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. Aug. 9 at 8.)

Robert Cray—The blues guitarist. With John Hammond. (Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 777-6800. Aug. 9 at 8.)

Gary U.S. Bonds—This rock-and-roll original enjoyed a brief comeback in the early eighties (when Bruce Springsteen took him under his wing), writing and producing "This Little Girl," a jangly homage to his sixties hits. (Tobin Plaza, World Trade Center. No tickets necessary. Aug. 10 at noon and 1.)

Goo Goo Dolls—A Buffalo-based band specializing in anthemic power chords and stadium-size hooks. Their sound—a blend of punk, metal, and pop—brings to mind the Replacements, but they're more starry-eyed and youthfully driven. (And the Replacements never made a habit of performing barefoot.) They'll be playing material from their excellent, overlooked last album, "A Boy Named Goo." With the Smoking Popes, a young, brash act from Chicago that is attracting lots of attention. (Irving Plaza. Aug. 10 at 8.)

Randy Weston / Rodney Kendrick—Weston has steeped himself in the music of North Africa, but there's still plenty of Brooklyn bop left in his piano; combining the jagged pith of Thelonious Monk, the fragrant harmonies of Duke Ellington, and the nasty rhythms of Bud Powell, he has a musical personality as urban as the M.T.A. Kendrick, a highly praised upstart, is a vibrant genre-jumping pianist. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park, Brooklyn. For information, call 1-718 855-7882. Aug. 11 at 7.)



Björk, at the Academy.

DARRYL TURNER

Santana / Jeff Beck—Guitar gods by the sea. Back in '69, Carlos Santana called his group the Santana Blues Band, and in the early seventies the guitarist's assimilationist blend of bluesy solos and salsa rhythms gave a world beat to post-Hendrix rock. Although his recent studio albums have been power-chord retreads—somebody get this man the right producer!—his live shows are always impassioned affairs. / El Becko is rumored to spend more time these days tinkering with old cars than playing music, but he's still the guitar hero's guitar hero—his highly imitable poses launched a thousand air guitars. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 11 at 8.)

Lester Bowie / Graham Haynes—The sectarian brouhaha that has tarred Bowie as an enemy of proper jazz overlooks the imaginative verve and deeply expressive power of the trumpeter's playing and bandleading. Haynes looks askance at the Miles cloning that passes for trumpet music these days; he's intent on devising his own expansive voice. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Aug. 12 at 7.)

Cranberries / Toad the Wet Sprocket—Having sold more than three million records, the Cranberries are the clear winners of the Gen X girl-band sweepstakes. They've certainly fared better than most of the chirpy groups that paved their way, like the Cocteau Twins and the Sundays. / This pleasant, hard-rocking quartet from Santa Barbara (its deceptively frivolous name was lifted from a Monty Python skit) had its first hit a few years back with "All I Want," a ballad from its wonderful third album, "Fear." (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 12 at 8.)

Dave Holland Quartet—What is Holland's greatest gift—his extraordinary playing or his knack for assembling first-rate bands? The bassist (who comes to New York far too rarely for a certified titan) has kept his mind open: fashionable neoclassicism may hold no interest for him, but relentless swinging still does. (Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. For information about tickets, call 1-718 638-5000. Aug. 13 at 3.)

Buckwheat Zydeco—The eponymous ambassador of zydeco music (a Cajun gumbo of accordion-heavy grooves) is a true party professional. Seasoned by decades of touring, he knows how to make even the most uptight New York crowd dance. Keep your eye on the washboard player. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Aug. 13 at 4:30.)

Al DiMeola / Stanley Clark / Jean-Luc Ponty—The hyperactive guitarist, the prodigious bassist, and the Gallic violin smoothie—a regular jazz-fusion triumvirate. (Westbury Music Fair. 1-516 334-0800. Aug. 13 at 8.)

Foo Fighters—Kurt Cobain was probably too nice a guy to snap, "Shut up! You're just the drummer." As it happens, his former Nirvana percussionist, Dave Grohl, actually appears to have a thing or two to say. This is his band, and their songs aren't half bad. With Shudder to Think. (Academy Theatre, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. Aug. 13 at 8.)

Björk / Aphex Twin—The Icelandic hurricane. / Aphex Twin (a.k.a. Richard James) is one of the most prolific and consistent ambient-music artists of the past decade. Far from your average knob-twirling technohead, James is to the nineties what Brian Eno was to the seventies: a daring musical explorer and sonic innovator. Aphex Twin's music ranges from sleepy moonwalks and spiralling symphonic orchestrations to jackhammer house music and tribal beats—constantly wavering between trance and dance. If his current album, "I Care Because You Do," is any indication, this show should be a schizoid mix. (Academy Theatre. Aug. 14-15 at 8.)

Terence Trent D'Arby—On his 1987 début, "Introducing the Hardline According to Terence Trent D'Arby," he sounded like the savior of R. & B.—the man who would take Prince's ideas screaming into the twenty-first century. Then came "Neither Fish nor Flesh," a self-indulgent piece of grandiose funk that almost destroyed his career. Now he's returned with "Terence Trent D'Arby's Vibrator," which falls somewhere between the two. Still, you can expect a burning live show. (Irving Plaza. Aug. 14 at 8.)

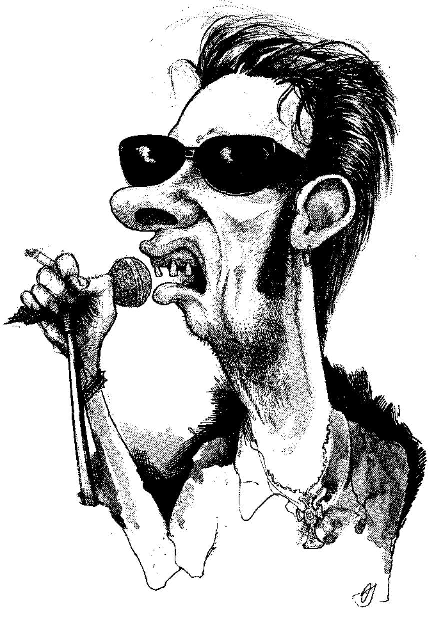
Jazz Cruise—Guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli leads a quartet on the water. (Circle Line. For information about tickets, call 563-3200. Aug. 15 at 7.)

Everly Brothers / Chet Atkins—The kings of candy-coated harmony meet the country gentleman of guitar. (Westbury Music Fair. Aug. 15 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel dungeon deep in the heart of the meat district. Aug. 9: A benefit for Mumia Abu-Jamal, with performances by, among others, guitarist Marc Ribot and poet Allen Ginsberg. Aug. 11: Funk with the **groove collective.** The progressive New York quartet **run on** turns up on Aug. 12. Their recent début, "On/Off," sounds like it was written and recorded in an afternoon, but it's altogether too ingenious and brainy to qualify as your average slacker soundtrack. Live, the band has been known to make a mighty impressive noise. Tuesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. spinoffs.



Shane MacGowan, at Tramps.

HARRY HORSE

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. Tuesday nights in August belong to the **boxing gandhis.** The **mingus big band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. If guitarist **rick derringer** (Aug. 10) should ever shuffle off this mortal coil, he'll be remembered for three major cultural contributions: "Hang On Sloopy," "Rock 'n' Roll Hoochie Koo," and producing the work of Weird Al Yankovic.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Romance awaits! Meet your date at the World Trade Center and hold hands on the PATH as it burrows its way under the Hudson to Hoboken, the burg that gave the world baseball and Ol' Blue Eyes. Aug. 11: The **bogmen.** Aug. 12: The **bush tetras.**

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Aug. 9: Ian Moore. **five chinese brothers** (Aug. 10) formed more than a decade ago at Columbia University (as the Special Guests) and have since become local heroes and one of smart pop's great journeyman acts. Think Squeeze or Crowded House, only louder, looser, bluesier—more American. Aug. 12: **martin zeller,** former frontman for the Gear Daddies.

Monkey Bar, 60 E. 54th St. (838-2600)—Beyond the monkey murals, there's a bright see-and-be-seen dining arena that's perfect for committing high-profile indiscretions in a strapless gown. But the place to be is the dark and crowded bar up front, by the grand piano, where the bar stools look like stuffed olives. You perch on the pimiento. Dining.

Nell's, 246 W. 14th St. (675-1567)—A Victorian-style club, home to an eclectic crowd of downtown youngsters dancing to throbbing funk and techno-pop.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—Ballroom dancing on Thursdays and Sundays. The rest of the week it's another dark, sweaty rock club, with bare-chested stage divers and the occasional whirling mosh pit. Aug. 10: **lords of acid** and **my life with the thrill kill kult.**

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Aug. 9-10: Spearhead. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Aug. 10-11: **shane mac gowan and the popes.** With his boozy balladeering and sparse dentition, MacGowan made his old band, the Pogues, the idols of college kids who had romantic notions about factory jobs in dirty old towns like Dublin and Liverpool. Rumor has it that Britain's Channel Four is developing a chat show called "Drinking with Shane," proof that MacGowan hasn't lost his flair.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Aug. 9: Sugar Ray. Monday night is Konkrete Jungle, an evening of dub, jungle, and trip-hop.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **nancy la mott** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Aug. 13: a double bill featuring **jimmy smith** and **jon hendricks.** On Aug. 15: pianist **mc coy tyner** and vibraphonist **bobby hutcherson** begin a weeklong run. These two modern-jazz monuments have been collaborating on and off for some thirty years, watching each other become legends. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. Aug. 10: The Buddy Rich Big Band salutes the work of the late drummer.

Cajun, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues band. Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz band.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Pianist **peter mintun** is in charge at the Bemelmans Bar. A genuine throwback to a gentler time, this elegant performer specializes in curios from the twenties and thirties like "Kitten on the Keys," but he has also been known to play cartoon theme songs if the mood (or the crowd) warrants it. Agreeable and reassuring without being over-gracious, he's sort of a curio himself.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—Through Aug. 13: the Charles Earland quartet. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with fine jazz seven nights a week. Wednesdays through Saturdays, **donald johnston** is the featured pianist. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Aug. 13: **christian mc bride.** This bassist, one of the most assured musicians of his generation (and the focus of a recent *Times* magazine feature), is a dream combination of Ray Brown and Paul Chambers. He can astonish as a sideman; in his new role as bandleader, his potential is unlimited. **ravi coltrane** takes over on Aug. 15. John Coltrane's son hasn't made life easy for himself by taking up the tenor sax. Still, his steady gig with his dad's old teammate, the drummer Elvin Jones, has turned him into a sharp soloist with a genial approach of his own.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Aug. 9-12: Piano and bass with Ronny Whyte and Dean Johnson. One of the giants of Detroit's fertile piano delta, **roland hanna** (starting Aug. 15) is an Ellington scholar, a crackerjack blues player, and a knight of the Liberian government. An open-armed stylist who can be as fastidious as he is funky, he remains delightfully beyond categorization.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great **gene bertoncini** lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **new orleans funeral and ragtime orchestra,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Through Aug. 12: **nell carter,** a singer with a beautiful buzz saw of a voice and the unflappable edge to go with it. Carter earned her Broadway stripes in "Ain't Misbehavin'," the 1978 Fats Waller revue, only to wind up in Hollywood as an even bigger (if less illustrious) star in sitcoms. Accompanied by bassist Lynn Keller and pianist Joellen Friedkin, she'll be making her first New York appearance in almost three years, which should mean a satisfying evening in the great cabaret in the sky. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—A new contender in New York's ever-changing jazz topography, this aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room, which resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over-the-top as the rest of the establishment. The great **jimmy scott** is currently in the midst of a two-week run. With good reason, the singer has dropped the "Little" that used to front his name—there's nothing diminutive about his talent, and he can count Madonna and Ray Charles among his admirers. Even on songs you've heard dozens of times before, he makes you listen for the next lyric as if it were a password to love and happiness.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Aug. 13: the **cyrus chestnut** trio. He has the mischievous presence of an elf, but make no mistake: this pianist is a monster. During his apprentice days with singer Betty Carter, it was obvious that his eminently smart and funky playing portended something special, and now he's delivering on that promise. Beginning Aug. 15: the **wallace roney** quintet. The **vanguard jazz orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Having made his mark as the pianist in Terence Blanchard's band, **bruce barth** (Aug. 11-12) enters the fray on his own. Barth is a young modernist forging his way on the path of neo-con heros like Herbie Hancock. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Aug. 12: guitar and piano with Jack Wilkins and Kenny Drew, Jr. Dining.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum." The highlight of this splendid loan exhibition is a series of superbly rendered low-relief stone carvings that possess Homeric narrative power and irresistible charm. A small companion exhibit, "Assyrian Origins," displays early objects from the collection of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, in Berlin. Both shows through Aug. 13. . . . ¶ The fifty-three paintings, drawings, and watercolors that make up the Annenberg collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterworks are on view. . . . ¶ More than a hundred painted-glass roundels produced in the European Lowlands between 1480 and 1560. Through Aug. 20. . . . ¶ "The Seven Deadly Sins," a suite of paintings by Paul Cadmus, is at the center of a small show of his works (another of which is "The Eighth Sin: Jealousy"). Through Aug. 13. . . . ¶ "An Egyptian Bestiary," a large non-petting zoo of falcons, baboons, hippos, and ibis, in stone, ivory, gold, bronze, and wood. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open, when weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—The design exhibitions here are always fun, and "Mutant Materials," a handsomely mounted exploration of the way recent technology has transformed industrial design, is one of the best. In what other museum could you find an orange fake-fur light-switch cover, Nike sneakers, and a baseball glove on display? Many objects, such as a squishy pen that molds to the shape of the user's fingertips, are displayed on a shelf, where the visitor is invited to palpate them. Through Aug. 27. . . . ¶ "Video Spaces: Eight Installations" presents some widely divergent sculptural uses of the medium. The best piece is by Tony Oursler: a tiny, limp doll with the face of a screaming woman projected onto its head. A challenging and sometimes rewarding exhibition. Through Sept. 12. . . . ¶ "Masterworks from the Louise Reinhardt Smith Collection," thirty-six paintings, drawings, and sculptures by, among others, Kandinsky, Picasso, Monet, Seurat, Braque, Degas, and Moore. Through Aug. 22. . . . ¶ Leon Levinstein's street photographs of people in New York neighborhoods from the fifties through the seventies. Through Oct. 12. . . . ¶ "Artist's Choice: Elizabeth Murray." A show of paintings, sculptures, drawings, and prints by seventy women, including Frida Kahlo, Agnes Martin, Louise Bourgeois, Georgia O'Keeffe, Joan Mitchell, and Eva Hesse. Through Aug. 22. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Georg Baselitz." A large survey of work by the East German painter famous for his upside-down figures. The explosion of neo-expressionism in the early eighties left a bad taste with viewers who lean toward more self-conscious art—heavy paint trowelled onto canvas didn't strike everyone as a guarantee of deep emotion. Baselitz, who had been earnestly pursuing his Sturm-und-Drang vision since the sixties, was always the most convincing artist of the bunch. His ragged painterly style remains assured: purposely rough (to convey the full flavor of torment), but often beautiful. Through Sept. 17. . . . ¶ "Josef Albers: Glass, Color, and Light," a show of paintings on glass, glass constructions, oil paintings, and rarely exhibited photographs. Through Sept. 17. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A terrific and illuminating double bill: "Edward Hopper and the American Imagination" (through Oct. 15) and "Florine Stettheimer: Manhattan Fantastica" (through Nov. 5). Hopper's work, with its solitary figures moving like somnambulists through otherwise vacant streets and interiors, embodies a very American vision of urban loneliness transformed by inexplicable moments of transcendence. Stettheimer, by contrast, epitomized the fertile marriage of café society and the avant-garde, in both her art and her life. Her effervescent paintings record the milieu she cultivated (it was quite a set: Carl Van Vechten, Parker Tyler, Virgil Thomson, and Marcel Duchamp were all among the regulars) in moods of brittle irony and poetic reverie. . . . ¶ "Views from Abroad: European Perspectives on American Art." Through Oct. 1. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A hundred and forty botanical watercolors, illustrations, engravings, and lithographs are on view; a third of them are of orchids. Among the artists represented are Pierre-Joseph Redouté, Margaret Mee, Marilena Pistoia, and Georg Dionys Ehret. . . . ¶ The skeletons of some one hundred saurischian and ornithischian dinosaurs have been cleaned and repositioned, and they're waiting for you. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of the career of Diane Itter (1946-89), a fibre artist who worked in miniature, using only fine linen thread and a knotting process. Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ "Marriage in Form," a display of Kay Sekimachi's layered weavings and paper designs and Bob Stocksdale's turned wood bowls. Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ "Facets of the Same Nature: A Survey of Contemporary Dutch Ceramics." Through Oct. 1. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

MUSEUM FOR AFRICAN ART, 593 Broadway—Antelope, leopards, hyenas, snakes, chameleons, buffalo, pangolins, and warthogs—they can all be seen in "Animals in African Art: From the Familiar to the Marvelous." (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—The area from Union Square to Madison Square, between Broadway and Sixth Ave., was known to the late Victorians as Ladies Mile, and "Ladies Mile: Emporia and Entertainments" revels in clothes, accessories, dolls, and memorabilia from that time and place. . . . ¶ "Play Ball: From Stickball to Baseball." Getcha trophies, bleacher seats, World Series balls, bats, and yearbooks heah. Through Aug. 20. . . . ¶ "A Century Apart: Images of Struggle & Spirit, Jacob Riis and Five Contemporary Photographers." Documents of the city's poor by the nation's first photojournalist, alongside work on similar themes by Martine Barrat, Mary Ellen Mark, Margaret Morton, Jeffrey Henson Scales, and Fred R. Conrad. Through Sept. 3. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Writers in Wartime: Looking at World War II," a selection of diaries, letters, first editions, and working proofs by Mann, Auden, Woolf, Hellman, Steinbeck, Kerouac, and others. (Berg Collection. Closed Mondays.) . . . ¶ "What Price Freedom" features twenty objects, from a Jefferson draft of the Declaration of Independence to a student handbill distributed in Tiananmen Square. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.) . . . ¶ Part one of "The Collecting Adventure, 1895-1995" examines the way the library has documented and preserved avant-garde and pop culture. Through Sept. 1. (Salomon Room.) . . . ¶ The librarians have chosen a hundred and fifty books, ranging from rare editions to dog-eared paperbacks, as the "Books of the Century." (Third Floor Gallery.) (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

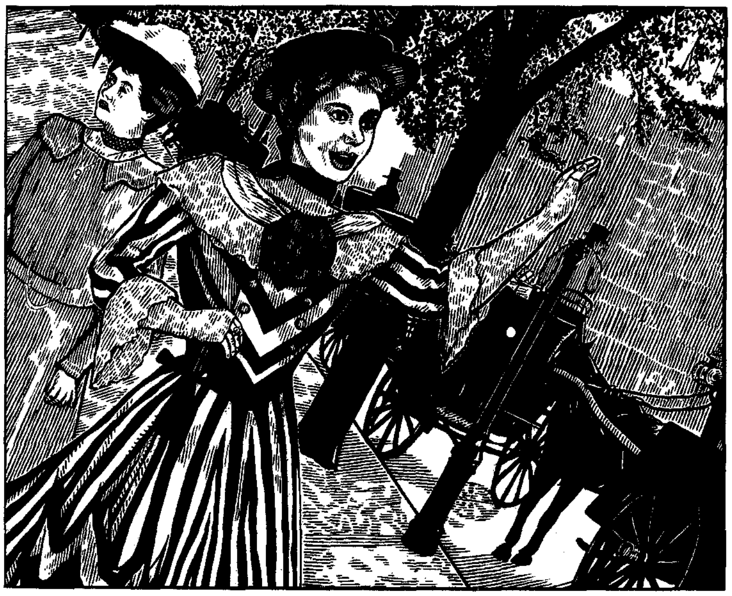
ISAMU NOGUCHI GARDEN MUSEUM, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—With its twelve galleries and peaceful, ivy-walled center garden, this museum is an oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of the artist's sculptures. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

DAN WITZ—Large, oddly shaped canvases of such sights as a circle of businessmen performing yoga. Through Sept. 5. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Open daily, 9 to 7.)

"MALE DESIRE"—Summer camp, in the form of homoerotic art by thirty artists. The show is not (or not merely) an exercise in lubriciousness. We are reminded, for example, that George Bellows and Grant Wood were just as obsessed with manliness as was Tom of Finland, whose simpering black-leather bimbos are starting to look like classics. Rockwell Kent's brawny sailor boys and J. C. Leyendecker's flawless preppies could have moonlighted as models for Paul Cadmus's very amusing "YMCA Locker Room." Also included are six etchings by David Hockney from his influential suite



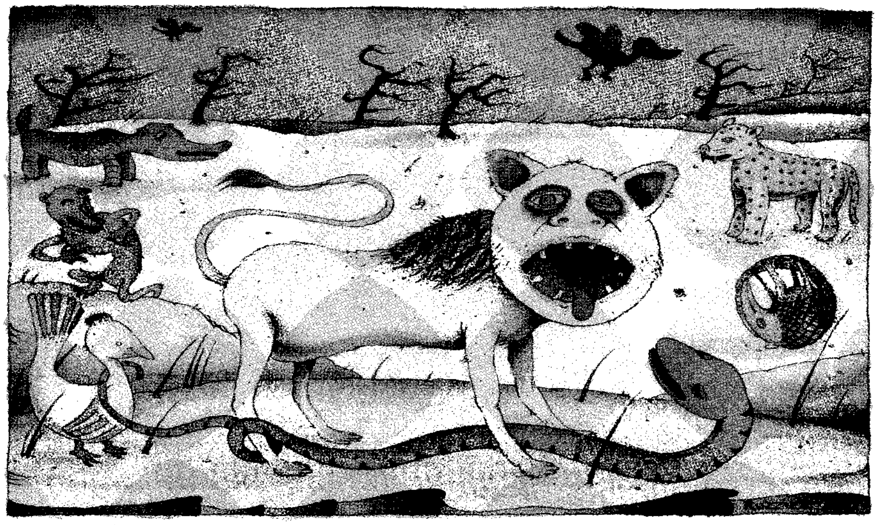
"Ladies Mile," at the Museum of the City of New York.

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

based on poems by C. P. Cavafy, and work by Eric Fischl, Keith Haring, Larry Rivers, John Button, and Andy Warhol. Through Sept. 16. (Ryan, 24 W. 57th St.)

"Collage: Made in America"—This exceptionally well-chosen exhibition has been hung in a manner that suggests a Victorian salon; *the visitor is provided with a map like* the ones that come with boxes of chocolates, and it all makes for a jolly, if haphazard, browse. A terrifying urban nightmare by Sue Coe hangs cheek by jowl with a weird, uncharacteristic Cornell—a lurid Ektachrome sunset with a crude figure propped up in front. Nancy Grossman's plausibly Picassoid pastiche of black gouache and yellowed newsprint, "The Cubist Club at St. Mark's Place," nestles next to a panel of Chris Burden's cancelled checks. Romare Bearden's jazz quartet is a textbook exercise in the medium: a bold, colorful composition made of snipped bits of paper which just flies. Through Aug. 25. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At **galerie st. etienne,** 24 W. 57th St.: Recent acquisitions of work by self-taught artists and by German and Austrian artists. Those represented include Earl Cunningham, Grandma Moses, and Horace Pippin among the former, and Lovis Corinth, Oskar Kokoschka, Käthe Kollwitz, and Egon Schiele among the latter. Through Sept. 8. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **marian goodman,** 24 W. 57th St.: Among the works here are a new painting by Richard Artschwager, six oils by Gerhard Richter, and "Cadmium & Mud & Titanium & Lead & Ferrous Oxide & So On," by Lawrence Weiner. Through Aug. 30. . . . **robert miller,** 41 E. 57th St.: Paintings, sculptures, and photographs by, among others, Louise Bourgeois, St. Clair Cemin, Gilbert and George, William Eggleston, and Adam Fuss. Through Aug. 25. . . . **werner,** 21 E. 67th St.: Paintings and sculpture by Georg Baselitz, James Lee Byars, Per Kirkeby, Markus Lüpertz, Sigmar Polke, and Don Van Vliet. Through Aug. 18.



"Animals in African Art," at the Museum for African Art.

SERGIO RUZZIO

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Glenn Ligon—More cool, tasteful rage from a leading political artist; now he has taken on boxing. The sport provides a brutal escape for young black men, he suggests, and the eight punching bags here serve as a neat metaphor for society's treatment of them. It's a little *too* neat, though, and the texts, by Muhammad Ali and Leon Spinks, are opaque. Through Aug. 25. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

"New York City Landmarks"—Paintings, drawings, and sculptures celebrating thirty years of preservation (as a result of the 1965 Landmarks Law). On view are a seven-foot mink-covered Empire State Building, by Tony Lordi, and works by Berenice Abbott, Richard Haas, Maggie Hopp, Esteban Chavez, and others. Through Aug. 25. (Ingbar, 568 Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

OTHER VENUES

"Affirmative Actions: Artists at Work"—Creative Time's twelfth annual "Art in the Anchorage" exhibition, held in the vaults of the Brooklyn Bridge, consists of nine large-scale installations that cross disciplines and mediums: a "Medicinal Garden," by Joan Bankemper; a large suspended model of the Brooklyn Bridge, by Karin Giusti in collaboration *with faculty and students from Brooklyn* College; a Friday-and-Saturday-night cabaret; theatrical performances; skateboarding displays and a competition; and much more. Through Sept. 14. (Cadman Plaza West at Front St., Brooklyn. Thursdays through Sundays, 1 to 6. For schedules, directions, and general information, call 206-6674.)

"Samuel Parsons, Jr. and the Art of Landscape Architecture"—Parsons (1844-1923) designed several New York City parks, among them Thomas Jefferson, DeWitt Clinton, and Canal Street. His thirty years of service in the Parks Department are celebrated with original plans and renderings, archival photographs, postcards, and memorabilia. Through Sept. 8. (Arsenal Gallery, Fifth Ave. at 64th St.)

Grand Central Terminal—In the Beaux Arts Main Waiting Room (where one imagines a sumptuous banquet being held while an enormous crowd waltzes in the Main Concourse) stands "Man with a Heart," Jonathan Borofsky's rather cold twenty-foot sculptures of men (one black, one white) with glowing, *beating hearts.* . . . ¶ Steve Gerberich's witty, slapdash sculptural accumulations are tucked into a glass-walled space across from Grand Central Books. Gerberich treats social and environmental themes with satisfying irreverence: "Shooting Gallery" offers a bison on a spit above an antique cabinet full of grenades, toy guns, and cowboy boots lined up like specimens—the whole kit and caboodle resting on a zebra-skin rug. The smallest work is "Hummingbird Heater," a sculptural haiku in which a toy bird dangles in the hot air inside a small, old space heater.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Charles Harbutt—Spirited and humorous pictures taken in the sixties and seventies, during the photographer's tenure at the Magnum agency, along with more recent work. Through Aug. 11. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Closed Mondays.)

Karl Struss (1886-1981)—Romantic platinum and palladium prints of the New York that was, by the Manhattan-born Photo-Secessionist and cinematographer ("Sunrise," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "The Fly"). Through Oct. 14. (Equitable, Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

" 'Dance Ink': Frame by Frame"—*Photographs* commissioned for the elegantly choreographed dance quarterly, by Josef Astor, Sylvia Plachy, Andrew Eccles, Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, William Wegman, and others. Through Aug. 31. (Furman Gallery, adjacent to the Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center. Open daily, 1:30 to 9.)

"H_2O"—Vintage and contemporary photographs of water, including works by Ralph Meatyard, Minor White, Diane Cook, Andrew Moore, Len Jenshel, Stuart Klipper, and Flip Schulke. Through Aug. 11. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

"The Insistent Subject"—Portraiture by a broad range of photographers, including Beaton, Weston, Callahan, Arbus, Hujar, and Mann. Through Aug. 18. (Danziger, 130 Prince St. Closed Mondays.)

"Large Bodies"—Large-scale photographs of various parts of the body, by, among others, Cindy Sherman, John Coplans, Chuck Close, Andres Serrano, and Bill Jacobson. Through Sept. 1. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

"On Holiday"—Delightful views of swimmers, sunbathers, operagoers, picnickers, and baseball players, by Max Dupain, J. H. Lartigue, Danielle Weil, John Loengard, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, and others. Through Sept. 2. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

"Summer Salon II (Pictures We Like)"—An eclectic gathering of photos by well-known artists and by artists underrepresented in New York, including prints by Robert Frank, James Wojcik, Dick Arentz, Rhona Bitner, Nat Fein, and Weegee. Through Aug. 31. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St.)

"Suprematism and Constructivism in Russia"—Photographs, photomontages, drawings, and documents tracing the development of these movements between 1919 and 1935, among which are works by Rodchenko, Malevich, Lissitzky, and Suetin. Through Aug. 19. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St. Closed Mondays.)

"Under 8 x 10 Inches"—Small prints by more than thirty artists, including George Tice, Evelyn Hofer, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Caponigro, André Kertész, and Jill Seymour. Through Sept. 1. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Nagasaki Journey: The Photographs of Yosuke Yamahata." Pictures taken in that city on August 10, 1945, the day after the bombing, by a twenty-eight-year-old Japanese Army photographer. Through Oct. 1. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"An American Century of Photography: From Dry-Plate to Digital—The Hallmark Photographic Collection." Despite strong efforts, this display of two hundred works, by both masters and less familiar artists, is uneven, but several of the more humble offerings are rewarding. William B. Post's "Intervale Winter" (1899) is a landscape concerned more with space than with pictorialism; the vision prefigures Instamatic snapshot composition by half a century. "House of a Thousand Windows" (1912), by Alvin Langdon Coburn, presents a dark, skewed-perspective view of an early high-rise that looks like a tabletop model. And Kentaro Nakamara's "Evening Wave" (1927) may be the most beautiful seascape ever. Through Sept. 10. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**john batho,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Aug. 31. . . . **harold feinstein,** Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave., at 51st St. Closed Thursdays, open Saturdays; through Sept. 15. . . . **jo ann verburg,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through Aug. 18.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of the City of New York.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

CONCERTS

Mostly Mozart—Aug. 9: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Orchestra in Haydn's Symphony No. 44, as well as Mozart's Piano Concerto in F Major (K. 459, with Dubravka Tomsic) and Symphony No. 40. . . . ¶ Aug. 10: Pianist André Watts and members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center perform Mozart's Piano and Winds Quintet and Janáček's Concertino for Winds, Strings, and Piano; Carlos Kalmar conducts the Mostly Mozart Orchestra in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 (with Mr. Watts). . . . ¶ Aug. 11: Mr. Kalmar leads the orchestra in Mozart's D-Major "Serenata Notturna," Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 (with Mr. Watts), and two works spotlighting bassoonist Milan Turkovic: Weber's Concerto in F Major (Op. 75) and Michael Haydn's B-Flat-Major Concertino (which is actually a single bassoon-centered movement extracted from a longer orchestral serenade). . . . ¶ Aug. 12: Mr. Kalmar conducts the orchestra in Mozart's D-Major "Serenata Notturna" and Symphony No. 41, as well as Beethoven's Triple Concerto (featuring the members of the Eroica Trio). . . . ¶ Aug. 14: The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields performs Beethoven's "Leonore" Overture No. 3 and Symphony No. 7, as well as Mozart's E-Flat-Major Piano Concerto (K. 271, with Till Fellner). Neville Marriner conducts. . . . ¶ Aug. 15: Mr. Marriner and the Academy offer an all-Beethoven program comprising the First and Fifth Symphonies and the Piano Concerto No. 2 (featuring Imogen Cooper). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Evenings at 8, with pre-concert recitals most evenings at 7.)

Monophony for Lunch—Notker Balbulus ("the Stammerer"), a ninth-century monk at the Swiss monastery of St. Gall, had trouble memorizing the long, rhapsodic melodies that prolonged certain words of Gregorian chant—most notably the melismas of the inescapably common word "alleluia." To jog his memory, he wrote sacred poems that matched the problematic musical passages syllable by syllable. Before long, these verses broke away as self-standing pieces that came to be called sequences. Of the hundreds of sequences, by Notker and others, that proliferated throughout Europe in the ensuing centuries, only four (including one for Easter, "Victimae Paschali Laudes," and one for the dead, "Dies Irae") survived the liturgical housecleaning of the sixteenth-century Council of Trent. (A fifth, the famous "Stabat Mater," was admitted to the liturgy in the eighteenth century.) The Schola (a group of seven male singers, directed by David Schofield) continues its monthlong exploration of Gregorian chant by performing sequences with words and/or music by Notker, Hildegarde von Bingen, and St. Thomas Aquinas, among others. (St. Malachy's Catholic Church, 239 W. 49th St. Aug. 9 at 12:45. No tickets necessary.)

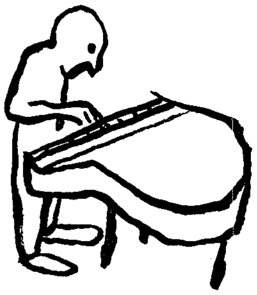
"An American Requiem"—A work by James DeMars that infuses the traditional Mass with elements of latter-day patriotism. The composer conducts the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, an orchestra, and soloists Audrey Luna (soprano), Linda Childs (mezzo-soprano), Robert Breault (tenor), and Simon Estes (bass-baritone). (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Aug. 8-9 at 8.)

Bargemusic—New York's floating concert hall assumes a French accent for a program of vocal and instrumental chamber music by Maurice Duruflé, Ravel (his Piano Trio and "Chansons Madécasses"), and Fauré (his C-Minor Piano Quartet). On the roster are mezzo-soprano D'Anna Fortunato, flutist Renée Siebert, pianist Randall Hodgkinson, violinist Christiaan Bor, violist Cynthia Phelps, and cellist Ronald Thomas. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Aug. 10 at 7:30 and Aug. 13 at 4.)

MOMA Summergarden—Pianists Simone Dinnerstein and Lorraine Min perform solo, four-hand, and two-piano works written in the United States during the two decades following the Second World War, including music by Ned Rorem, Miriam Gideon, David Del Tredici, Louise Talma, Alan Hovhaness, Lou Harrison, George Perle, Earle Brown, and John Corigliano. (Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, 14 W. 54th St. Aug. 11-12 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

Daniel Shelly—Bassoonist, with harpsichordist Asako Hirabayoshi, performing sonatas by Vivaldi, Corelli, Telemann, and Johann Friedrich Fasch. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Aug. 13 at noon.)

New York Ragtime Orchestra—Pianist Mas Ikemiya leads syncopated toe-tappers by Joplin, Irving Berlin, and others. (Rockwood Drive Circle, Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. Aug. 13 at 2. . . . ¶ McGinley Center, Fordham University, Bronx Rose Hill Campus at Southern Blvd. Aug. 13 at 4. No tickets necessary for either performance. For rain-date and other information, call 1-718 601-7399.)



"Dormant Craters"—The octogenarian composer Henry Brant will conduct his most recent spatial creation, a successor to such previous efforts as "Fire on the Amstel" (a 1982 piece in which four boatloads of flutists and percussionists played while floating down Amsterdam's Amstel River, their sounds intermingling with those of numerous stationary musicians along the route) and "Northern Lights Over the Twin Cities" (a 1986 composition featuring seven ensembles in a Minnesota sports arena). In "Dormant Craters," sixteen percussionists—playing a multicultural array of Chinese, Indonesian, Thai, and Western instruments—will be strategically positioned in the middle of Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park, with the audience surrounding them. The composer has (ostensibly) elucidated the title by commenting, "Whether or not the sound of this piece has any connection with dormant volcanic craters, I am hardly in a position to say, but the craters I mean are the latent explosions we don't know about yet, both in the human sphere and in the natural world." (Aug. 13 at 6. No tickets necessary. Rain date is Aug. 14 at 6.)

Avner Arad—Pianist, performing music by Bach, Liszt, and Schumann. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Aug. 13 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—Aug. 9 at 8:30: Steve Reich and Musicians perform Mr. Reich's "Drumming" (Part One), "Electric Counterpoint," Sextet, "Piano Phase," and "Different Trains." . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 8:30: André Previn conducts the Boston Symphony in Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Tamara Smirnova) and Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 8:30: Mr. Previn and the Boston Symphony offer Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin," Dutilleux's Symphony No. 2, and Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Emanuel Ax). . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 2:30: Neville Marriner leads the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields in an all-Beethoven program comprising the Symphonies No. 1 and No. 7 and the Third Piano Concerto (with Till Fellner). (Lenox, Mass. 1-413 637-1600. . . . **Note:** Partisans of modernity should take special notice of Tanglewood's annual contemporary-music festival, which unrolls this week. Call the box office for program information.)

Caramoor—Final concerts of the season. Aug. 10 at 4:15: The Brentano String Quartet plays quartets by Haydn (in E-Flat Major, Op. 71, No. 3), Britten (his First), and Beethoven (in C Minor, Op. 18, No. 4). . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 8:30: Duelling jazz pianists Jackie Terrasson and Danilo Perez. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 8:30: Trumpeter Roy Hargrove's jazz quintet. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 5:30: The festival's semicentennial season closes with a salute to a handful of rising stars—violinists Maria Bachmann, Ayako Yoshida, Elisa Barston, and Livia Sohn; violists Misha Amory and Tatjana Mead; and cellists Daniel Gaisford and Wendy Warner—in a program that comprises Schubert's C-Major Quintet and Mendelssohn's Octet. (Katonah, N.Y. 1-914 232-1252.)

Glimmerglass Opera—Aug. 10 at 8 and Aug. 13 at 2: Handel's "Tamerlano." . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 8: Britten's "Paul Bunyan." . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 8 and Aug. 15 at 2: "Don Giovanni." . . . ¶ Aug. 14 at 2: "The Yeomen of the Guard." (Cooperstown, N.Y. 1-607 547-2255. The season ends on Aug. 21.)

Bard Music Festival—This year, the festival trains its sights on Béla Bartók, who died fifty years ago. Celebrated as he is for the depth of his influence and the breadth of his achievements (in ethnomusicology, music education, and piano virtuosity, in addition to composition), only a fragment of his œuvre is widely performed. Famous and obscure works will be presented on an equal footing during the festival's two weekends, and scholars will add their two cents to round out the public's understanding of this genius. Aug. 11 at 8:30: Bartók's String Quartet No. 6 (with the Colorado String Quartet), Violin Sonata No. 2 (with violinist Eugene Drucker and pianist Diane Walsh), Five Songs (Op. 16, with soprano Veronika Kincses and Ms. Walsh), and Fourteen Bagatelles (Op. 6, performed by pianist Todd Crow). . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 10 A.M.: A panel discussion about Bartók's pedagogical works, with performances interspersed. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 1:30: Bartók's Violin Sonata No. 1 and "Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs" are set in the context of Dohnányi's Piano Quintet No. 2 and solo-piano pieces by Liszt and Debussy. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 8:30: Leon Botstein conducts the American Symphony Orchestra in Bartók's "Two Portraits" (Op. 5, with Mr. Drucker) and Suite No. 1 (Op. 3), as well as Strauss's "Also Sprach Zarathustra" and Busoni's transcription of Liszt's "Rhapsodie Espagnole" (featuring pianist Robert Taub). . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 10 A.M.: A roundtable on the development of the string quartet from Haydn to Bartók. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 1:30: The Colorado String Quartet plays Bartók's Quartets No. 1 and No. 4, as well as the Quartet No. 10 of Bartók's follower László Lajtha. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 4:30: Bartókian pianophiles get their moment in a concert that comprises the "Dance Suite" (played by Mr. Crow), Piano Sonata (with Mr. Taub), and Piano Quintet. (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 1-914 758-3226. Lectures begin a half hour before all concerts. Through Aug. 20.)

Bridgehampton Chamber Music—The opening concerts of the festival's twelfth season (which continues through Aug. 24) feature flutist Marya Martin, violinist Ani Kavafian, violist Paul Coletti, cellist Fred Sherry, and pianist André-Michel Schub. (Presbyterian Church, Montauk Highway, Bridgehampton, N.Y. Aug. 12 at 8 and Aug. 13 at 6:30. For information about tickets, call 1-516 537-3507.)

Maverick Concerts—Sephardic songs and Monteverdi madrigals find their place in a wide-ranging program by the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble. (Woodstock, N.Y. 1-914 679-8217. Aug. 13 at 3.)

Music Mountain—The Orlando String Quartet plays quartets by Haydn (in E-Flat Major, Op. 33, No. 2, the "Joke") and Schnittke (his Third), as well as Brahms's Piano Quintet (with Pamela Mia Paul). (Falls Village, Conn. Aug. 13 at 3. For information about tickets, call 1-203 824-7126.)

KATE SHEPHERD

IMMERSION THERAPY

When you've been stuck in traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge for an hour, you're apt to forget that the reason you're where you are (and the city is where it is) is the water. What follows are a few of the options New Yorkers have to go with the flow.

Prince of Tides—Al Ysaguirre, the president of the Metropolitan Association of Sea Kayakers (MASK), has the kind of reassuring aloofness that you look for in a river guide. Low-key, athletic, alert, he speaks of his sport as if it were a form of weather ("People do get killed, but it's very minor"). Like all sea kayakers, Ysaguirre plays the tides. When he takes contingents of paddlers (thirty, sometimes fifty at a time) around Manhattan, they beach on one or another of the tiny islands that dot the city's tidal straits, eat lunch, stretch, check out the panorama—killing time, basically, until the tides change. Then it's off on the maximum flood or ebb, slaloming around on the wake of the powerboats in a flurry of paddles and elbows. People on the promenades and in the riverside parks cheer the sheer folly of it as the tides keep the kayaks speeding by, adding four to five knots an hour to their exhausting, exhilarating pace. On the night following such a tour, Ysaguirre says, "you will sleep like a top." (For information about MASK, and its quarterly magazine, *The Drift*, which lists local tours and events, call 260-5185 or 1-718 783-2306.)

Surf City—"New Yorkers are known for their ability to surf anything, from shin-high surf to double overhead." This according to Lars Svanberg, who owns and runs Main Beach Surf & Sport, in Wainscott, Long Island; he also records a daily wave report (1-516 537-7873) for those who, like himself, "have arranged their schedules to be able to drop it all and go." From May through October—the tropical-storm season—prime spots pop up all along the sandbars of Long Island's south shore, though the waves generally improve as you travel east, from the shifty beach breaks at Rockaway Point to the glassy, hollow point breaks of beaches with rock bottoms, like Radars and Alamos on Montauk Point. Amateur competitions, such as next week's Bunger Surf Shop Classic (at Babylon's Gilgo Beach, on Aug. 19 at 8 A.M.) help the best surfers tune up for the New York State Surfing Championship, which comes to Montauk as the storm waves peak, on Oct. 8. (For a list of surfing competitions, call the Eastern Surfing Association, at 1-800 937-4733.)

The Schvitz—Check your valuables at the front desk. Slip into your bathing suit in a discreet, European way (there's one changing room for everybody) and step around the guy on the pay phone (an oddsmaker, calling in odds) on your way downstairs, where you can skip the sauna and steam rooms and go straight to the radiant-heat room, with its big oven and its three levels of cement steps loaded with regulars—towelled Lubavitchers, SoHo artist/welders, models in yoga poses, gamblers (who obviously love to sweat), actors, New Agers rubbing themselves with eucalyptus oil. Pick a spot on the middle level, beside the spigots, and go through the stages: glow, perspire, sweat, pour. At Stage Four, grab the bucket of ice-cold water and dump it on your head. Gasp. Blink. Repeat until serene, about one hour. (The Russian and Turkish Baths, 268 E. 10th St. 674-9250. Coed, Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; women only, Wednesdays; men only, Thursdays and Sundays.)

Getting Tanked—Blue Light Flotation, one of the last of those altered-state pods in which it was once thought possible to behold William Hurt naked in a monkey crouch, is really just Sam Zeiger, who lives on 23rd Street. Mr. Zeiger is finicky clean, in the manner of a mother or a monk, which is clearly why he is still in the sensory-deprivation business. He walks first-time floaters through the steps (the shower; the earplugs; then, down an immaculate hall, the tank itself), closes a screen door, and disappears. Once you're inside the flotation tank—this one is larger than the eighties-era cells that felt uncomfortably like lockdown—the rest is self-explanatory: lie there and obey the laws of physics. The body buoys up on the water (an Epsom-salt solution more saline than the Dead Sea) and stays up. After a few minutes, you feel like a balloon in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, but without the ropes. (148 W. 23rd St. For appointments, call 989-6061.)

Into the Drink—This Sunday at 9 A.M., eighteen people in Lycra and sheep's grease will walk down Battery Park's Gangway 5, spit in their goggles, dive into New York Harbor, and start racing up the East River; some seven hours later, the first finishers in the Manhattan Island Marathon Swim will round the Battery on the tidal current of the Hudson to return to the starting line. The course record-holder is thirty-three-year-old Shelley Taylor-Smith, of Sydney, Australia, who completed the circuit (twenty-eight miles and change) in 5:45:25 one early Friday morning a few weeks ago. "The water tasted a lot sweeter than all the years I've swum it," Taylor-Smith reported. The event is not a spur-of-the-moment thing—swimmers have to have a boat and crew trailing through the wave chop to hand them liquids, find the fastest chutes of current, and pull them out if they begin shivering too much. Nor is it a youthful folly: this year, the entrants' average age is thirty-eight. (The best views of the race are from Battery Park, beginning at 4.)

ANDRZEJ CZECZOT

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Arctic Art—Artists who concentrate on rendering polar bears and penguins in Play-Doh can gather with their contemporaries at Central Park Zoo's Chillin' Out with the Polar Bears and Penguins Weekend. From 11 to 3, in the Play-Doh Sculpting Garden, zoo visitors can collaborate on a life-size papier-mâché polar bear, or they can make miniature, multicolored penguins or wearable penguin beaks in their favored medium. (Fifth Ave. at 64th St. Aug. 12-13. No charge beyond zoo admission.)

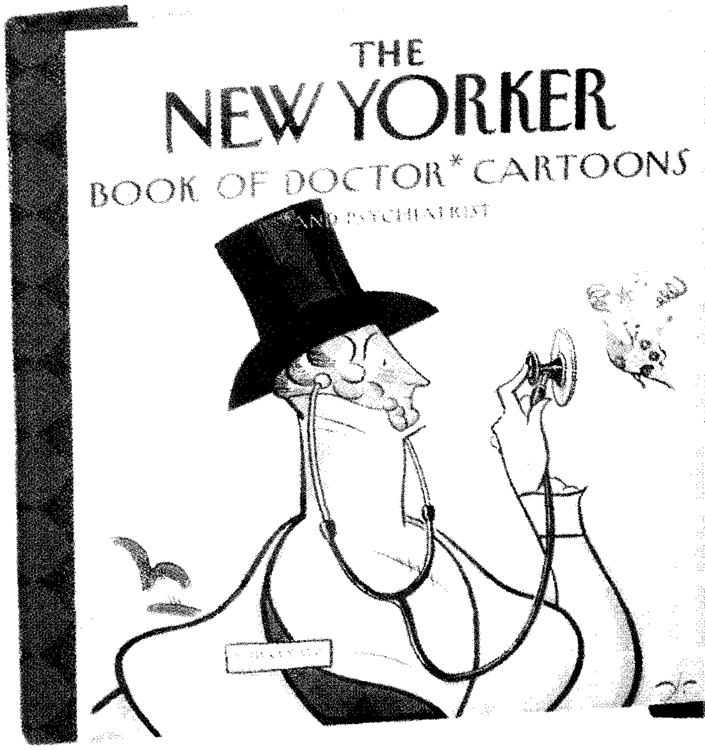
Readings—Aug. 9 at 7:30: Lynne Sharon Schwartz reads from her new novel, "The Fatigue Artist." (Barnes & Noble, 4 Astor Place, at 9th St. No tickets necessary.)

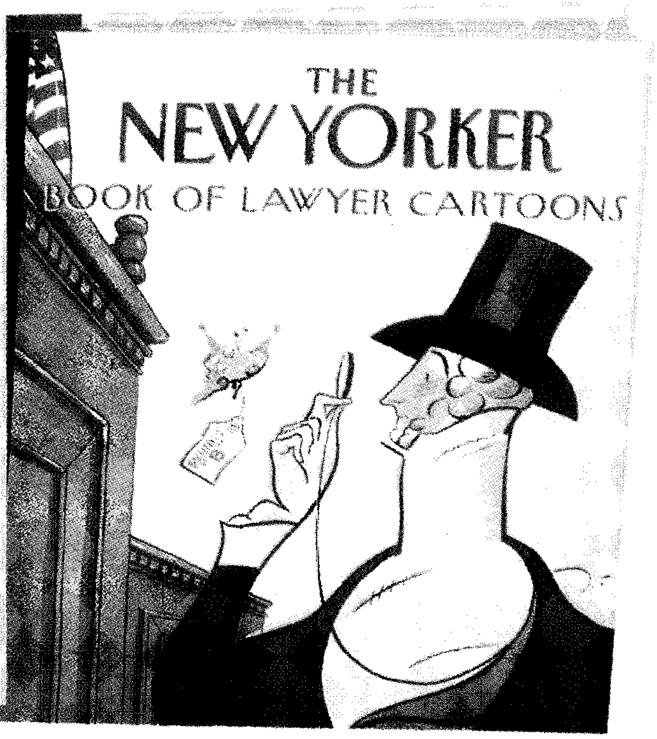
Talks—Aug. 11 at 7:30: Bradford Keeney, therapist and shaman, talks about his initiation into a tribe of Kalahari bushmen. (Open Center, 83 Spring St. 219-2527. Tickets at the door on the evening of the event.) . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 1: Onnie Millar helps children age five and older make headdresses for the West Indian Carnival (coming up on Labor Day) with sequins, beads, and feathers, as she traces African influences on Caribbean costume. (Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont St. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the event.) . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 6: Patricia Jasaitis, of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Urban Composting Project, will answer questions (gardeners are encouraged to bring samples of their compost-in-progress) and turn over the finer points of the art. (Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway. To register for the event, call the Compost Hotline, at 1-718 622-4433, ext. 246.)

Tours—Aug. 12 at 11: The New York Transit Museum routes a tour into the M.T.A.'s 207th Street Shop, where the entire R-58 Refuse Flat Car fleet is getting a general overhaul. For more information, call 1-718 243-8601. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 1: Richard McDermott, editor of the *New York Chronicle*, scares up such bygone denizens of the old Five Points slum as Slops Connelly, Gentle Maggie, and Lizzie the Dove, in a tour of the East River neighborhood from City Hall to South Street Seaport. For more information, call 1-718 423-8738.

SPORTS

Finlandia Cleanwater Challenge—A little before noon on August 10, the first finishers of the eight-hundred-mile stage race that began on July 11, in Chicago, are expected to kayak across the finish line at South Street Seaport. At press time, the forty-three-year-old South African Lee McGregor was still enjoying the half-hour lead that he had built on the strong, surf-like waters of the Great Lakes. A former world-class swimmer who trained in the United States (and learned about "hurt, pain, agony, and all that stuff that Americans live for") never made the Olympics because his country had been banned from international competition. In 1986, at the age of thirty-five, he took up kayaking; within a month, he ranked among his country's top four paddlers. McGregor has passed his appetite for competition on to his seventeen-year-old son, Hank, who is currently the favored kayaker in this month's twenty-one-kilometre World Marathon Championship, in Spain. As the senior McGregor's tour passed through the flatwater stages on the Erie Canal, Greg Barton—the American athlete who won the gold medal in the thousand-metre kayak sprint at the Seoul Olympics, in 1988—was nibbling at McGregor's lead. "So here I am like an idiot," McGregor says, "hanging on for three hours a day waiting for an Olympic sprinter to make his break. This is not a race. It's hell warmed up sideways." He sounds like he's having the time of his life.





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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

The Brothers McMullen—A romantic comedy about three Irish-American siblings (Jack Mulcahy, Mike McGlone, and Edward Burns) who are reunited upon the death of their father. Written and directed by Burns. Opening Aug. 9. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

Dangerous Minds—Michelle Pfeiffer stars as an English teacher in a tough inner-city high school. With George Dzundza, Courtney B. Vance, and Robin Bartlett. Directed by John N. Smith. Written by Ronald Bass, from LouAnne Johnson's 1992 memoir, "My Posse Don't Do Homework." Opening Aug. 11. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, and Embassy.)

I Can't Sleep—A thriller set in Paris, about an aspiring Lithuanian actress (Katerina Golubeva), a musician from the Antilles (Alex Descas), his drag-queen brother (Richard Courcet), and the elderly residents of a hotel, who are being preyed on by a serial killer. Directed by Claire Denis, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jean-Pol Fargeau. In French. Opening Aug. 11. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

A Kid in King Arthur's Court—A California boy (Thomas Ian Nicholas) lands in Camelot, in an adventure-comedy also starring Joss Ackland as King Arthur and Ron Moody as Merlin. Directed by Michael Gottlieb. Written by Michael Part and Robert L. Levy. Opening Aug. 11. (Guild.)

A Walk in the Clouds—Keanu Reeves plays a Second World War veteran who agrees to pose as the husband of a California vineyard owner's daughter (Aitana Sanchez-Gijon) when he learns that she is pregnant. With Giancarlo Giannini and Anthony Quinn. Directed by Alfonso Arau ("Like Water for Chocolate"). Written by Robert Mark Kamen, Mark Miller, and Harvey Weitzman. Opening Aug. 11. (Beekman, East 85th Street, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 20.)

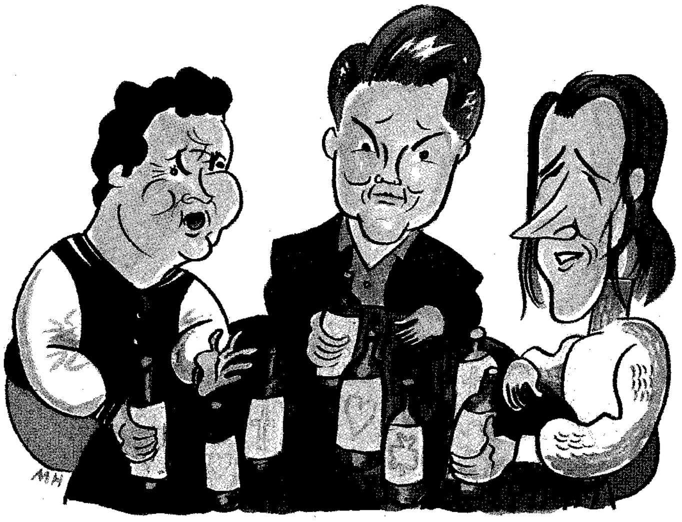
Apollo 13—Ron Howard's movie, like the perilous 1970 lunar mission itself, gets home safely only by the skin of its teeth. Dean Cundey's cinematography is drab, James Horner's score is unbearable, and Howard retards the momentum with frequent cutaways to the astronauts' families, who are, unsurprisingly, mighty worried. But the acting—especially by Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, and Bill Paxton (as the astronauts) and Ed Harris (as a NASA flight controller)—is sharp and persuasive. And the screenplay, by William Broyles, Jr., and Al Reinert, makes the scientific details both comprehensible and exciting. In the end, this failed mission seems like the most impressive achievement of the entire space program: a triumph not of planning but of inspired improvisation.—T.R. (7/10/95) (34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Regency.)

Art for Teachers of Children—Writer-director Jennifer Montgomery's autobiographical drama, about an affair between a teen-ager (Caitlin Grace McDonnell) and a photographer (Duncan Hannah) who is later the object of an F.B.I. investigation into child pornography. (Film Forum; through Aug. 15.)

Babe—The animal actors have human voices in Chris Noonan and George Miller's adaptation of Dick King-Smith's 1985 children's book, in which an intrepid pig competes for the world sheepdog championship. Directed by Noonan. (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Bushwacked—A comedy about a rube (Daniel Stern) who, while trying to clear his name of murder charges, becomes the leader of a troop of scouts in the wilderness. Directed by Greg Beeman. Written by John Jordan, Danny Byers, Tommy Swerdlow, and Michael Goldberg. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and National Twin.)

Clueless—The high school in writer-director Amy Heckerling's first feature, the 1982 "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," was party central; this one is a world of cellular phones, nose jobs, and fast, funny mall-speak, where all the girls love sexy makeovers and all the boys are beautiful young pups. Heckerling's idea was to set "Emma" among Beverly Hills teen-agers, and it's inspired. Alicia Silverstone, an actress with an easy and uncomplicated demeanor (her beauty suggests a warmer Sharon Stone), plays a matchmaking high-school queen named Cher who is so naïvely confident that she doesn't see how manipulative her behavior is; like Jane Austen's heroine, she's spoiled, but her heart is in the right place. With its charming performances, bubblegum colors, and intentionally funny product placements, the movie is like a kiss in a candy store—silly and sweet.—B.D. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Embassy.)



Opening August 9, Jack Mulcahy, Mike McGlone, and Edward Burns in "The Brothers McMullen."

Country Life—A romantic comedy about sheep farmers and socialites in Australia in the nineteen-twenties, directed by and starring Michael Blakemore, who also wrote the screenplay—which is loosely based on Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya." With Sam Neill, Greta Scacchi, John Hargreaves, and Kerry Fox. (Village East Cinemas. . . . ¶ Cinema I; through Aug. 10.)

Double Happiness—Jade (Sandra Oh), a self-confident twenty-two-year-old who lives with her parents, wants to be an actress; her overprotective parents, who are emigrants from Hong Kong, want her to marry a nice Chinese boy. The movie is billed as a comedy, but it's much more interesting for the repressive family dynamic it captures. Stephen Chang is excellent as the father. Written and directed by Mina Shum.—S.K. (Eastside Playhouse and Quad Cinema.)

The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love—The title characters—two high school seniors, a tomboy outcast (Laurel Hollomon) and a popular girl who has yet to come out (Nicole Parker)—are charming, in a modest, indie-movie sort of way. But this is basically a puppy-love story rewritten for girls: admirably unsensational, earnest, and engaging, in the tradition of an after-school special. Written and directed by Maria Maggenti.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and Cinema 3.)

The Indian in the Cupboard—The fine children's book by Lynne Reid Banks has received a faithful treatment from screenwriter Melissa Mathison. Yet about all that comes through Frank Oz's direction of the story—involving a boy whose magic cupboard brings plastic toys to life—are the lessons in responsibility to others that the tiny Indian (played by the Native American rap singer Litefoot) teaches the boy (Hal Scardino). Their sweet, gawky interplay is winning, but there's little sense of wonder.—B.D. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 59th Street East Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ East 85th Street and Embassy; through Aug. 10.)

Jeffrey—The title character in Paul Rudnick's adaptation of his 1993 Off Broadway comedy is a gay New Yorker (Steven Weber) who decides to swear off sex. With Patrick Stewart, Michael T. Weiss, Bryan Batt, Sigourney Weaver, Christine Baranski, Nathan Lane, and Olympia Dukakis. Christopher Ashley directed. (Cinema 3rd Avenue, Quad Cinema, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Kids—Larry Clark's film follows some New York City teen-agers through a day and a night of largely self-destructive activity. These kids seem to be wandering in total darkness, and their nihilism outdoes even the celebrated pessimism of Generation X. Although the movie will undoubtedly be received as a wake-up call, a sobering report on a lost generation, it's resolutely neutral on the big social questions. What's fascinating—and unsettling—about the picture is Clark's unmistakable admiration for the recklessness of the young. He's more concerned with the texture of teen-age anomie than with its causes or its consequences, and the obsessive, ardent gaze he turns on his subjects as they stumble toward oblivion has a strangely aestheticizing effect; he can't help turning these wasted, aimless kids into icons of the beautiful and damned. With Leo Fitzpatrick, Chloe Sevigny, and Justin Pierce. Screenplay by Harmony Korine (who was nineteen when he wrote it).—T.R. (7/31/95) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

MARCELLUS HALL

A Little Princess—Alfonso Cuarón's film, based on a novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, is one of the rare children's movies that don't merely pay lip service to the imagination but actually use it. The script presents the battle of youthful fancy against adult "realism" as a kind of epic struggle; the antagonists are Sara Crewe (Liesel Matthews), a bright, happy, exuberantly creative girl, and Miss Minchin (Eleanor Bron), a boarding-school headmistress who is a ruthless downsizer of her pupils' imaginations. The message, spoken by Sara, is "*All* girls are little princesses," and, although that may sound a bit sticky, this funny, lively, stirring movie makes us believe it.—T.R. (5/29/95) (Lincoln Square.)

Living in Oblivion—Movies about movies always run the risk of self-involvement; the trick, as Truffaut demonstrated in "Day for Night"—and as Tom DiCillo shows he has learned—is to keep things light, aerating the layers of narrative with gags and letting the serious implications take care of themselves. DiCillo's movie is slight but smart, and it doesn't overstay its welcome. Steve Buscemi plays a harassed director trying to make a low-budget picture in New York, who suffers a plague of glitches that range from sour milk in the crew's coffee to an angry dwarf. It's the ideal part for Buscemi: pallid, ratty, and pop-eyed, he has the air of a man who is deeply in love with movies and wishes he weren't. The film feels horribly accurate, but it's more than a feast for buffs—anyone who has ever hated dream sequences, for instance, should come away happy.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Net—Irwin Winkler's cyber-thriller shuffles morosely from action sequence to action sequence, like a long bus trip with multiple transfers. Sandra Bullock (who drove the bus in "Speed") plays a computer whiz who stumbles on evidence of a sinister conspiracy; she's pretty and likable, but this wan chase picture needs a lot more than she can give it. The screenplay, by John Brancato and Michael Ferris, is remarkably free of ingenuity, and therefore of suspense. It's unlikely that the movie's intended audience—computer-savvy viewers addicted to the speed and versatility of their machines—will be impressed by a thriller that unfolds at the deliberate pace of a "Matlock" episode. With Jeremy Northam and Dennis Miller.—T.R. (8/7/95) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

Nine Months—Samuel (Hugh Grant), a child psychotherapist who doesn't like children, is aghast when he discovers that his girlfriend (Julianne Moore) is pregnant; they have just enough time to argue, split up, and bond again before the baby is born. The film's energy, such as it is, arises from Grant's patter with other men (an aggressive Tom Arnold, a lazily horny Jeff Goldblum). The women—Moore and Joan Cusack—are little more than magnets for male anxiety. They have the babies, the movie tells us with its sunny, reactionary guile; what more do they want? Directed by Chris Columbus.—A.L. (7/24/95) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Criterion Center.)

Operation Dumbo Drop—The story of five Green Berets (played by Danny Glover, Ray Liotta, Doug E. Doug, Corin Nemec, and Denis Leary) who airlift an eight-thousand-pound elephant into a Vietnamese village in 1968. Directed by Simon Wincer. Written by Gene Quintano and Jim Kouf; based on an article by Jim Morris. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, Lincoln Square, and Embassy 1.)

The Postman—Antonio Skármeta's bittersweet 1985 novel, "Burning Patience," upon which this movie is loosely based, told the story of Mario, a lonely postman who delivers mail to Pablo Neruda in Isla Negra, the desolate corner of Chile where the poet spent his final years. In Michael Radford's lovely but sanitized version, the action has been moved two decades earlier to picturesque Italy. As Neruda, the great Philippe Noiret somehow conquers being dubbed in Spanish-accented Italian; as Mario, the late Italian comedian Massimo Troisi is painfully affecting. In Italian.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, Cinema II, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

River of Grass—An independent picture, written and directed by Kelly Reichardt, in which a Florida housewife (Lisa Bowman) goes on the lam—or tries to—with a gun-wielding loser (Larry Fessenden). (Little Theatre.)

Roy Cohn/Jack Smith—Jil Godmilow's record of the late Ron Vawter's solo performance as two very different gay men—one a closeted attorney, the other an avant-garde filmmaker and performance artist. Cohn's speech is an imaginative re-creation by Gary Indiana; Smith's monologue is authentic, from one of his theatre pieces. (Anthology Film Archives.)

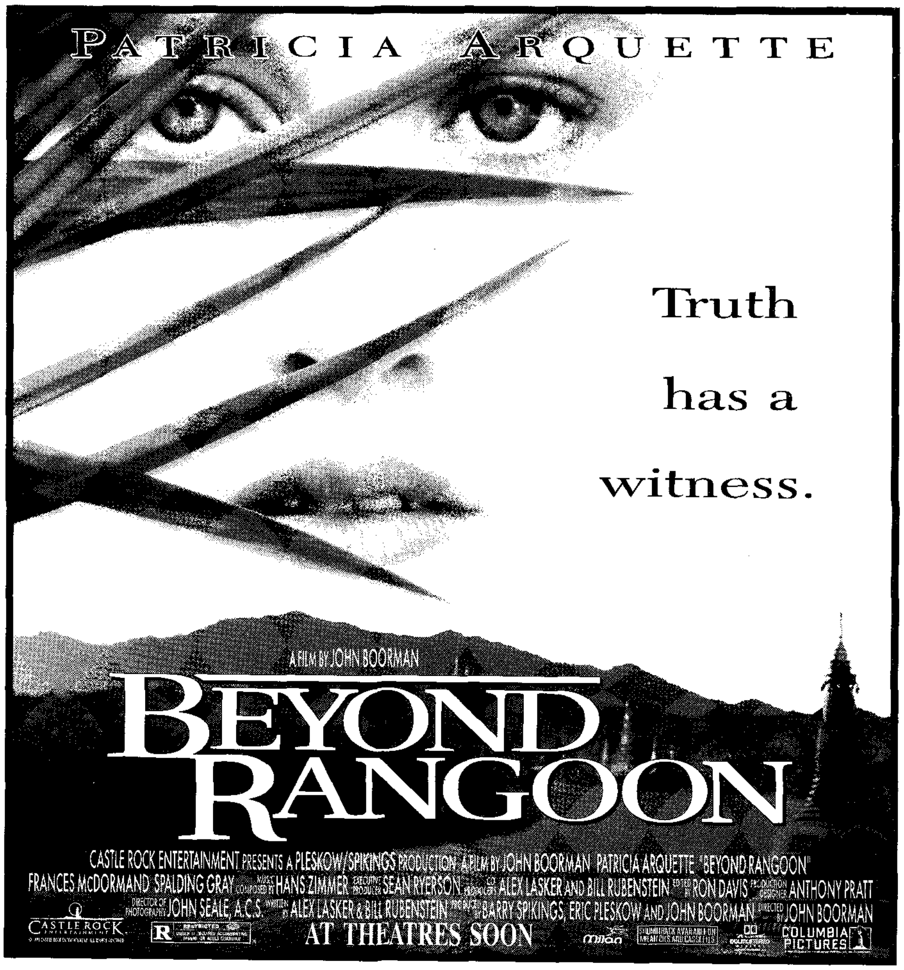
Safe—Carol (Julianne Moore), the heroine of Todd Haynes's peculiar, daring new movie, is a wealthy Southern California housewife stricken with a mysterious disease. The best diagnosis anyone can come up with is "environmental illness"—which means, essentially, that she's allergic to the world she lives in. The movie's rhythm is hypnotic, and when, midway, the action shifts to a New Age desert compound that represents Carol's last hope of restoring her health, the filmmaker's distancing techniques begin to pay off in volatile, eccentric satire. Moore, in a nearly unplayable role, is amazingly vivid and touching; this is a heartbreaking portrait of a woman in full, panicked retreat from life.—T.R. (Village East Cinemas and Angelika 57.)

She Lives to Ride—Alice Stone's documentary look at women and motorcycles includes archival footage and interviews with, among others, an octogenarian cyclist and the creator of *Harley Woman* magazine. (Little Theatre.)

Smoke—Five years ago, the director Wayne Wang asked the novelist Paul Auster to work up one of his stories as a screenplay. The result—a highly cerebral intertwining of the lives of white and black characters in Brooklyn in 1990, centering on a cigar-store owner (Harvey Keitel) and a lonely writer (William Hurt)—is obviously a labor of love. But Wang's sentimentality and Auster's self-consciousness don't go together: the direction is literal, and the lines sound like short-story dialogue read aloud. Only Forest Whitaker, playing a guilty father, comes off well. A gorgeous sequence that runs behind the final credits—with no dialogue, just a song by Tom Waits—suggests what the film *might* have been. With Harold Perrineau, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Ashley Judd.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center, Sutton, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Something to Talk About—Julia Roberts stars as a Southern housewife who discovers that her husband (Dennis Quaid) is having an affair. With Robert Duvall, Gena Rowlands, Kyra Sedgwick, and Haley Aull. Directed by Lasse Hallstrom. Written by Callie Khouri. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Species—In Los Angeles, where no one can hear you scream, a comely young blonde (Natasha Henstridge)—who is, in fact, half human and half extraterrestrial—roams the streets in search of a man to mate with. Hard on her heels are five alien-hunters (Ben Kingsley, Forest Whitaker, Michael Madsen, Marg Helgenberger, and Alfred


PATRICIA ARQUETTE
Truth has a witness.
A FILM BY JOHN BOORMAN
BEYOND RANGOON
CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS A PLESKOW/SPIKINGS PRODUCTION A FILM BY JOHN BOORMAN PATRICIA ARQUETTE "BEYOND RANGOON"
FRANCES McDORMAND SPALDING GRAY MUSIC COMPOSED BY HANS ZIMMER EXECUTIVE PRODUCER SEAN RYERSON CO-PRODUCERS ALEX LASKER AND BILL RUBENSTEIN EDITED BY RON DAVIS PRODUCTION DESIGNER ANTHONY PRATT
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN SEALE, A.C.S. WRITTEN BY ALEX LASKER & BILL RUBENSTEIN PRODUCED BY BARRY SPIKINGS, ERIC PLESKOW AND JOHN BOORMAN DIRECTED BY JOHN BOORMAN
CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT
R RESTRICTED
AT THEATRES SOON
Milan
COLUMBIA PICTURES

Molina), who intend to destroy the Babe from Another Planet before she can have unsafe sex and drop a litter of nasty mutants. Roger Donaldson's film splices together bits from vampire stories, the "Alien" series, and the 1987 B picture "The Hidden," and the result is pretty unsightly—it doesn't make sense, it isn't funny, and it isn't scary.—T.R. (Village Theatre VII, 59th Street East Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy. . . . ¶ East 85th Street; through Aug. 10.)

Under Siege 2: Dark Territory—Steven Seagal returns, this time as a passenger on a cross-country train seized by terrorists who plan to blow up the Pentagon. Eric Bogosian is the lead bomber. Geoff Murphy directs, from a screenplay by Richard Hatem and Matt Reeves. (Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. Wedst Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Unzipped—Douglas Keeve's documentary follows the fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi through the preparations for his fall, 1994, New York show. (Village Theatre VII and Lincoln Square.)

Virtuosity—A thriller set in 1999, starring Denzel Washington as a retired Los Angeles police officer who returns to the force to capture a computer-generated criminal (Russell Crowe). With Kelly Lynch, Stephen Spinella, William Forsythe, and Louise Fletcher. Directed by Brett Leonard. Written by Eric Bernt. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Waterworld—Kevin Costner plays the Mariner—part man, part fish, and the unofficial Prince of Mutants—in a postapocalyptic action picture of the "Mad Max" type. Lurking beneath its conventional adventure-movie surface is a bizarre environmental parable, in which Costner's rugged, ecologically correct loner battles a scurvy bunch of pirates called Smokers, who smoke cigarettes, drink Jack Daniel's, and burn fossil fuels. None of the filmmakers appear to have realized that spending a fortune to make a picture that condemns excessive consumption and preaches the wise use of resources might seem a bit disingenuous. What's really propelling the movie is the vanity of its star (who is also one of the producers); at the end, Costner gives himself the most florid and protracted action-hero apotheosis since the conclusion of "Shane." With Jeanne Tripplehorn, Tina Majorino, and Dennis Hopper. Directed by Kevin Reynolds, from a screenplay credited to Peter Rader and David Twohy.—T.R. (8/7/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Baronet, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Wild Reeds—André Téchiné's coming-of-age drama, set in a quiet provincial town in 1962, is the best French film in years. The young characters are all deeply confused about their political, intellectual, and sexual identities; the director sets up their conflicts with masterly ease, and, using smooth, complex tracking shots, carries them toward resolutions that are tentative but real. The movie flows like a river. Téchiné simply takes his characters from one point to another—from juvenile ignorance to a place where they can see themselves, and others, a little more clearly—and he makes that short journey look momentous. Few movies dealing with teenagers have been so accurate about the moral and emotional urgency of adolescents' attempts to understand their lives, or so forgiving of their failures. Gaël Morel, Élodie Bouchez, Stéphane Rideau, and Frédéric Gorny play the main characters, and they're all terrific. In French.—T.R. (7/31/95) (Quad Cinema.)

ALSO PLAYING

Batman Forever (reviewed in our issue of 7/10/95): Gemini, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center. . . . **Braveheart** (6/5/95): Movieland 8th Street Triplex. . . . **The Bridges of Madison County** (6/19/95): Tower East, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square. . . . **Burnt by the Sun** (5/8/95): Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **Crumb** (5/1/95): Film Forum 3. . . . **Die Hard with a Vengeance** (5/29/95): Criterion Center. . . . **Don Juan de Marco** (4/10/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **First Knight** (7/17/95): Beekman and Lincoln Square. . . . **Forget Paris** (5/29/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Free Willy 2: The Adventure Home**: Lincoln Square and Criterion Center. . . . **French Kiss** (5/29/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Grosse Fatigue**: 68th St. Playhouse. . . . **Judge Dredd**: Embassy. . . . **Lie Down with Dogs**: Village East Cinemas. . . . **Little Odessa**: Plaza. . . . **Muriel's Wedding**: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Pocahontas**: Village East Cinemas, Guild, Lincoln Square, and Olympia. . . . **Priest** (3/27/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Pulp Fiction** (10/10/94): Movieland 8th Street Triplex. . . . **Rob Roy** (4/17/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Wings of Courage** (4/24/95): Lincoln Square.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
Anthology Film Archives, 2nd Ave. at 2nd (505-5181).
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000).
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
Plaza, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd (513-5408).
Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
Guild, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St., between 8th and 9th Aves. (504-0960).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
Paris, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
Regency, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
Lincoln Square, B'way at 68th (336-5000).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
Olympia 1 and II, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
Embassy 1, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
National Twin, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

Belle de Jour (1967)—Luis Buñuel was in his late sixties when he made this icy, bracingly unwholesome film about the secret life of an elegant Parisian bourgeoise. Séverine (Catherine Deneuve), who is frigid with her handsome and considerate husband (Jean Sorel), spends her afternoons as a prostitute in a discreet, upscale brothel. The movie, adapted by Buñuel and Jean-Claude Carrière from a popular novel by Joseph Kessel, is a pristine example of the great filmmaker's serenely outrageous late style. In this picture, desire has a de-luxe blandness that's both mysterious and deeply, unnervingly funny. Also with Michel Piccoli, Geneviève Page, and Pierre Clementi. In French.—T.R. (19th Street East 6 and Paris.)

Crossfire (1947)—Psychological depths are sounded, though not deeply: the murder victim is a Jew, the murderer an anti-Semite. (The depths in the original novel, "The Brick Foxhole," by Richard Brooks, were a little different: the victim was a homosexual.) This tense, well-acted thriller was made by the producer Adrian Scott, the director Edward Dmytryk, and the writer John Paxton. Robert Ryan brings his considerable talent for portraying obsessive, isolated individuals to the role of the sly, anti-Semitic ex-sergeant. With Robert Mitchum, Gloria Grahame, Robert Young, Sam Levene, and Paul Kelly. There are condescending little messages on the evils of race prejudice that make you squirm; this is the patina of forties melodrama.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Aug. 12.)

The Greatest Show on Earth (1952)—A huge, mawkish, trite circus movie directed by Cecil B. De Mille in a neo-Biblical style. It suggests that the rivalry and love affairs of a couple of trapeze artists (Betty Hutton and Cornel Wilde), an assistant (Gloria Grahame) to an elephant trainer, the circus manager (Charlton Heston), and a clown (James Stewart) are awesome. Life under this particular big top is also awesomely clean and awesomely melodramatic; Stewart isn't just a clown—he's a doctor who has disguised himself as a clown. Also with Dorothy Lamour, Lyle Bettger, Henry Wilcoxon, Lawrence Tierney, Emmett Kelly, and John Ringling North. This cornball enterprise won the Academy Award for Best Picture.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 12-13.)

Ladies in Retirement (1941)—An entertainingly hokey murder chiller on the stage, but not very successfully adapted to the screen. With Charles Vidor directing, this lonely-rural-cottage gothic seems to take itself too seriously, as if it were really a psychological study. Ida Lupino works hard as a severe, plain-faced murderess, Isobel Elsom sips her wine and nibbles her bonbons as the woman who innocently befriends her, and Elsa Lanchester and Edith Barrett are Lupino's loony sisters, who stuff their neat rooms with their collections of crows' feathers, dead birds, and underbrush. From the play by Reginald Denham and Edward Percy; with Louis Hayward.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Aug. 10 and 13.)

The Middleman (1975)—Satyajit Ray's least known great film tells the story of a university graduate, Somnath Banerjee (Pradip Mukherjee), who, unable to find a suitable job, turns his hand to business—a desperate choice for a boy from a Brahmin family. A friend shows him the ropes of the commercial life, and in the course of the picture he becomes so tangled up in them that he's barely able to move. In this film Calcutta is a place where everybody cheats and nobody wins. For an hour and a half, Ray conducts a brisk, acerbic tour of the corrupt city, and then, in the movie's extraordinary last act, he slows the pace, darkens the tone, and takes us all the way to tragedy. Ray's sales-man is even unluckier than Arthur Miller's: instead of dying, Somnath winds up having to live with the knowledge that he has sold his soul too cheaply. When he clinches his final, most lucrative deal, we feel a shattering sense of loss. With Rabi Ghosh, Utpal Dutta, Aparna Sen, and Sudesna Das. In Bengali.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Ministry of Fear (1944)—Very little of Graham Greene's mystery novel survives in this unmemorable Paramount picture, directed by Fritz Lang. As melodramas of the period go, however, this one is better made than most. Ray Milland has just been released from an insane asylum, where he was confined for murdering his wife, when he is drawn into a plot by a gang of German spies who are after defense plans. The heroine is the unimposing Marjorie Reynolds; the villain is that falsetto cutthroat Dan Duryea.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 11-12.)

Mix-Up (1986)—A quirky, funny French TV documentary about what happened after the infant daughters of two British mothers got switched at a Nottingham nursing home in November, 1936; the focus is on how the girls developed as individuals and as family members. The director, Françoise Romand, uses some fiction-film techniques (including reënactments) to aid her inquiry into the problem of nature versus nurture. But for the most part she relies on interviews shot inside and outside the fate-tossed households, on top of red double-decker buses, and against a dirty brick wall splashed with her own graffiti. This Frenchwoman's view of the hearty and genteel sides of the English middle class turns out to be unexpectedly complex.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 10.)

Sabrina (1954)—Audrey Hepburn is forced to overdo her gamine charm in this horrible concoction about a Cinderella among the Long Island rich. She's the chauffeur's daughter who's in love with the playboy son (William Holden) of her father's employer (Walter Hampden). There's also an older son—an earnest magnate—and Humphrey Bogart got trapped in the role. Billy Wilder directed, and he had a hand in adapting the Samuel Taylor play ("Sabrina Fair"), though Bogart is said to have accused Wilder's three-year-old offspring of having written the script.—P.K. (Bryant Park; Aug. 14.)

What Every Woman Knows (1934)—Helen Hayes making nice. The mousiest First Lady of the theatre in a classic mouse role. Gregory La Cava directed this version of the James M. Barrie play, a prestigious little number from M-G-M with a cast that includes Brian Aherne as the opaque husband of the little darling. With Dudley Digges, Donald Crisp, and David Torrence.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Aug. 13-14.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—Through Aug. 10: "Black Mama, White Mama" (1973, Eddie Romero) and "Sheba, Baby" (1975, William Girdler). . . . ¶ A program of films directed by William Castle. Aug. 11-14: "House on Haunted Hill" (1959), with Vincent Price. . . . Aug. 15: "Macabre" (1958) and "13 Ghosts" (1960).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—Through Aug. 10: "Midnight Dancers" (1995, Mel Chionglo). . . . ¶ The 1995 Festival Hong Kong; all the films are in Cantonese, with English and Chinese subtitles. Aug. 11: "Return of the God of Gamblers" (1994, Wong Jing), with Chow Yun-fat and Tony Leung. . . . Aug. 12: "The New Legend of Shaolin" (1994, Jing), with Jet Li and Tse Miu. . . . Aug. 13: "C'est la Vie, Mon Cheri" (1993, Derek Yee), with Anita Yuen and Lau Chin-yun. . . . Aug. 14: "Once Upon a Time in China V" (1994, Tsui Hark), with Zhao Wen-zhou and Rosamund Kwan. . . . Aug. 15: "The Bride with White Hair II" (1994, Ronnie Yu and David Wu), with Leslie Cheung and Brigitte Lin.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films made from Broadway plays. Aug. 10 at 2:30: "Summer and Smoke" (1961, Peter Glenville), with Geraldine Page and Laurence Harvey. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 6 and Aug. 13 at 5: "Ladies in Retirement" (†). . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 7:45: "Out of the Fog" (1941, Anatole Litvak), with John Garfield and Ida Lupino. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 2:30: "The Big Knife" (1955, Robert Aldrich), with Jack Palance, Lupino, Shelley Winters, Wendell Corey, Jean Hagen, and Rod Steiger. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 6 and Aug. 15 at 1: "Peter Pan" (1924, Herbert Brenon; silent), with Betty Bronson and Ernest Torrence. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 8 and Aug. 14 at 1: "A Kiss for Cinderella" (1926, Brenon; silent), with Bronson and Tom Moore. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 1: "The Guardsman" (1931, Sidney Franklin), with Lynn Fontanne, Alfred Lunt, Roland Young, Ann Dvorak, and ZaSu Pitts. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 3 and Aug. 14 at 6: "Reunion in Vienna" (1933, Franklin), with John Barrymore. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 5 and Aug. 15 at 3: "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney" (1929, Franklin), with Norma Shearer, Basil Rathbone, and Hedda Hopper. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 1 and Aug. 15 at 6: "The Trial of Mary Dugan" (1929, Bayard Veiller), with Shearer and Lewis Stone. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 3:15 and Aug. 14 at 3: "What Every Woman Knows" (†).

At the American Museum of the Moving Image, a Three Stooges film festival.

MARC ROSENTHAL

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Aug. 9 at 4 and 7:45: "Céline and Julie Go Boating" (1974, Jacques Rivette; in French). . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 4, 6:15, and 8:30: "Mix-Up" (†). . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 4 and 7:40 and Aug. 12 at 6:15 and 9:30: "Ministry of Fear" (†). . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 6 and 9:15 and Aug. 12 at 4:45 and 8: "Fly by Night" (1942, Robert Siodmak), with Richard Carlson. . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. Aug. 12-13 at 2: "The Greatest Show of Earth" (†). . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 4:45 and 8:15 and Aug. 15 at 2 and 7:45: "Dark Journey" (1937, Victor Saville), with Conrad Veidt. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 6:30 and 9:45 and Aug. 15 at 3:45 and 9:30: "Stamboul Quest" (1934, Sam Wood).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Television shows by the team of William Hanna and Joseph Barbera. Through Aug. 13: "Cattanooga Cats."

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Two programs of short films featuring the Three Stooges. Through Aug. 11 at 10:30, 1, and 2:30: "Women Haters" (1934), "Gents Without Cents" (1944), and "Dutiful but Dumb" (1941). . . . From Aug. 15 at 10:30, 1, and 2:30: "False Alarms" (1936), "Crash Goes the Hash" (1944), and "Healthy, Wealthy and Dumb" (1938). . . . ¶ A series of films starring Robert Mitchum. Aug. 12 at 2: "Crossfire" (†). . . . Aug. 12 at 4: "The Big Steal" (1949, Don Siegel). . . . Aug. 13 at 2: "Angel Face" (1952, Otto Preminger). . . . Aug. 13 at 4: "Blood on the Moon" (1948, Robert Wise).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Aug. 13 at 7, the feature will be "Orlando" (1993, Sally Potter), with Tilda Swinton.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Aug. 15 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Le Crabe Tambour" (1977, Pierre Schoendoerffer; in French).

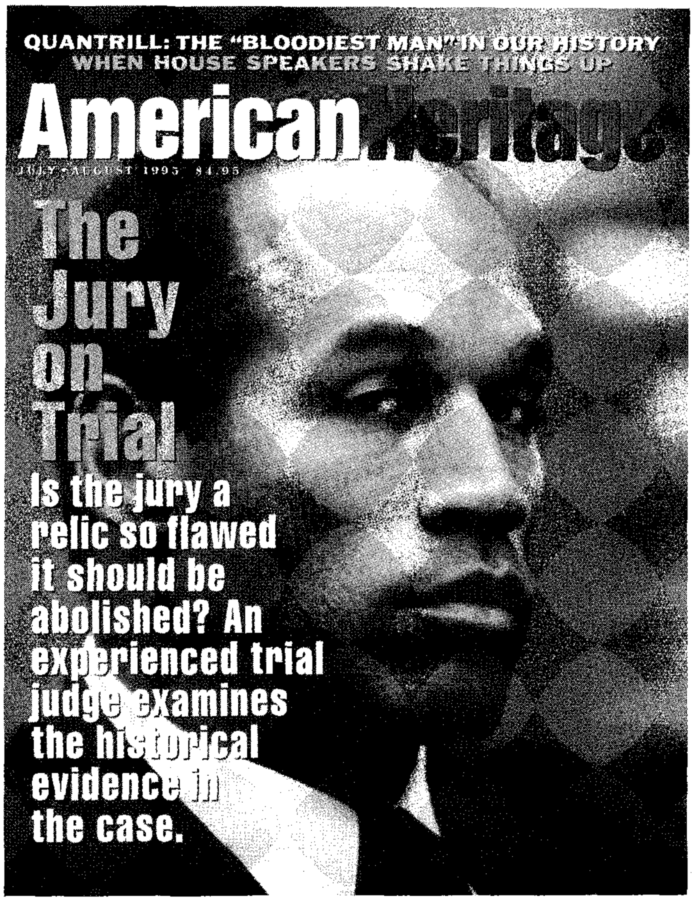
Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with Looney Tunes and coming attractions. The feature on Aug. 14 will be "Sabrina" (†). (Rain date is the following night.)

Film al Fresco, at Le Madri Restaurant, 168 W. 18th St. (727-8022)—Sunday evenings, more films out-of-doors, with food and live music beginning at 6 and the movie starting at about 8:30. On Aug. 13, the feature will be "The Story of Boys and Girls" (1991, Pupi Avati; in Italian).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—Aug. 9 at 2:30: "The Godfather" (1972, Francis Ford Coppola), with Marlon Brando and Al Pacino. . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at noon: "Days of Heaven" (1978, Terrence Malick), with Richard Gere, Brooke Adams, Sam Shepard, Linda Manz, and Robert Wilke. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 2:30 and Aug. 11-13 at 4: "The Big Gamble" (1931, Fred Niblo). . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 5:30 and Aug. 11-13 at 1:30: "The Crowd" (1928, King Vidor).

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Aug. 9: "Black Like Me" (1964, Carl Lerner), and "Nothing but a Man" (1964, Michael Roemer), with Ivan Dixon. . . . ¶ Aug. 10: "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" (1973, Dixon), with Lawrence Cooke, and "The Final Comedown" (1972, Oscar Williams), with Billie Dee Williams. . . . ¶ Aug. 11: "Black Athena" (1992, Bandung File) and "The Second Coming" (1993, Blair Underwood), with Rosalind Cash. . . . ¶ Aug. 12: "Sister Session" (1994, Florante Galvez) and "Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (1983, Spike Lee). . . . ¶ Aug. 13: "Native Son" (1951, Pierre Chenal), with Richard Wright, and "Brightness" (1987, Souleymane Cissé). . . . ¶ Aug. 14: "Haiti: Killing the Dream" (1992, Katherine Kean) and "The Panama Deception" (1992, Barbara Trent). . . . ¶ Aug. 15: "Dark Manhattan" (1937, Harry Fraser) and "Marching On" (1943, Spencer Williams).

They Call This Justice?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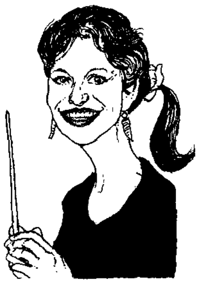
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE BOOK, THE GOV, HIS WIFE, AND HER COVER

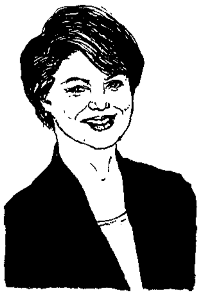

Rachael Worby

IN Washington, truthtelling has always been a risky business. A gaffe, as one pundit once defined it, is when someone inadvertently tells the truth. And so when Rachael Worby, an accomplished conductor and the wife of the governor of West Virginia, delivered a painfully honest assessment of her marriage in a new book, "Divided Lives: The Public and Private Struggles of Three Accomplished Women," by Elsa Walsh, there were inevitably old hands in Washington who felt she had breached a rule of the town's etiquette: political wives, like Victorian children, are to be seen and not heard.

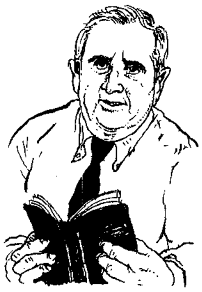
While none of the eye-rolling and tsk-tsking is particularly surprising, what *is* unexpected is the identity of one of its major participants. Charlie Peters, the widely admired editor of *The Washington Monthly*, who has made a distinguished career of telling the stark truth about meek and mighty alike in the name of better government, might have been expected to welcome the book for its candor. But Peters, the author of a sharp-eyed book of his own, entitled "How Washington Really Works," instead appears to be providing a lesson in just that.

Peters, it turns out, is from West Virginia. Moreover, he is on friendly terms with its Democratic governor, Gaston Caperton. And so when an unsolicited copy of Walsh's not yet published manuscript was sent by Simon & Schuster to his offices last spring he read the chapter on Worby with great interest, and alarm. The chapter's finale describes Worby, who is originally from Nyack, as dissolving in tears at the prospect of being dragged back from a vacation to the desolation of West Virginia, and that struck Peters as sure to provoke indignation in his home state. "It was a bullet aimed at the heart of the Governor," he explains. "Frankly, I don't think Rachael gave a damn. It was good publicity for her. It might help her in New York. But if you're from West Virginia it's a bit hard to take."

What has outraged Walsh, however, is that Peters did not keep his concern to himself. Over her protests, he sent a worried letter to the Governor exhorting him to try to get Walsh to change the chapter before it was published. "If you still want a political future in West Virginia," he wrote on March 13th, "you should try to get Elsa to change the end—I doubt that she will but it's worth a try." Peters acknowledges that he never doubted that Walsh's account was true; the trouble was that it was *too* true. "To put it that bluntly was going to hurt," he says.


Elsa Walsh

For Walsh, the idea of Peters, a pillar of journalistic ethics, urging a public official to airbrush out warts by pressuring a journalist was too much. "He always sets himself out to be holier than members of the establishment press because they are too cozy with those in power, and here he is advising a politician about how to handle his public image," she says. "If I did that at the Washington *Post*"—Walsh is a reporter on that paper's metropolitan staff, currently on leave—"I'd be fired." (Walsh probably has a bit more job security than she lets on. Like Worby, she is married to a famous man—in her case, the Washington *Post's* legendary investigative reporter, Bob Woodward.)


Charlie Peters

In the end, Peters says, he had a right to warn a friend of political trouble, just as Walsh had a right to write whatever she thought was true. Moreover, he says, "The Woodwards are inhumanly pompous to be disturbed about this." But there is one thing he faults himself for: his political judgment. To his astonishment, no one in West Virginia cared that much that the Governor's wife hates the state. Instead, West Virginians were scandalized by the book's sexual revelations. "I didn't care how much they screwed or what they were wearing when they did," Peters says—which may be as good an argument as any for why even the best journalists shouldn't double as political advisers.

DOG STAR

THE director Gerald Gutierrez is negotiating to take his Tony Award-winning production of "The Heiress" to London, but if it means a long separation from Phyllis Kate Gutierrez, his boon companion of nine years, he won't do it. "I won't leave her for that amount

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JARRETT HUDDLESTON

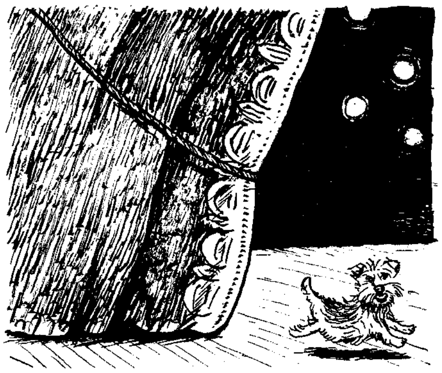
of time,” says Gutierrez, who takes Phyllis with him to rehearsals, to restaurants, and on the road. It’s not that Phyllis is ill; it’s just that she’s a Yorkshire terrier, and wouldn’t be allowed into England until after a six-month quarantine. “Here’s the way I see it,” Gutierrez says. “If Trevor Nunn can fly home on weekends to see his family during the rehearsal of ‘Arcadia’ at Lincoln Center, then the producers can fly me home for weekends to see Phyllis.”

If you exclude a family parakeet, Phyllis is the first pet Gutierrez has ever had, and he researched his choice extensively. “I wanted a breed you can carry on an airplane,” he says. He discounted a Chihuahua, because his friend the playwright Alfred Uhry, who wrote “Driving Miss Daisy,” said, “I’ll come over and be mean to it and put it in the refrigerator.” So he settled on a Yorkie, and the rest is show-biz legend.

When Gutierrez won this year’s Tony for best director, Phyllis was on his lap and was therefore seen on national television. “Phyllis knows her place,” Gutierrez says when asked why he didn’t bring her up to the stage, as he had at the Drama Desk Awards two weeks before. “She knew that that was my moment.” But, according to Gutierrez, most of the questions from the press after the ceremony were about his eye-catching date. “One Broadway reporter asked, ‘Has she seen all the Broadway plays?’ I said, ‘Yes, she has.’ ‘Did she like them?’ I said, ‘No. She had a problem with “Hamlet.” She doesn’t like any shows with thunder. And, of course, she hates “Cats.” ’ ”

Media exposure has liberated Phyllis from her role as silent partner. Just the other day, a limo arrived to take her, with Gutierrez in tow, to a guest appearance on the fX channel’s “Pet Department” show. “She does impressions,” Gutierrez explains. “She does Angela Lansbury in ‘Sweeney Todd.’ She does Gloria Swanson in ‘Sunset Boulevard’—not Glenn Close, and not Betty Buckley, because Betty was in ‘Cats.’ ”

Since the first preview of “The Heiress,” Phyllis has acquired a marked appetite for adulation. Gutierrez recalls, “I was in the wings. I heard all this applause and laughter. I look at the TV monitor in the stage manager’s booth, and there’s Phyllis running back and forth in front of the house curtain. It took three or four minutes to catch her. That’s happened four or five times. She loves the audience. If I’m doing brush-up rehearsals and don’t close the door, and Phyllis hears the house, that dog is out there. It’s like Judy Garland at the Palace.”



NIGHT MOVES

How do you know when the party’s over? One recent evening, the downtown club Nell’s was clogged with young black men and women dressed, coiffed, and dancing in the most cutting-edge styles. After considerable quantities of Moët had been drunk, blunts smoked, phone numbers exchanged, and deals—some legal, some perhaps not so legal—closed, the d.j. launched a string of singles by the hottest rapper in hip-hop, The Notorious B.I.G. At that moment, everyone knew that the party was just getting started.

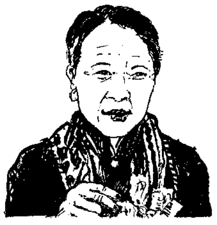
In minutes, the room was bouncing with B.I.G.’s “Who Shot Ya”—a slow, pulsing song with a delicately malevolent quality that seems to capture sonically the air of living on the edge of danger which some young black men work hard to project and others are saddled with. Moments into the song, a group of male dancers decided to prove their manhood with pullups on a water pipe running across the dance floor’s ceiling. The party’s end seemed close.

As one young man strained to complete his fifth pullup, a pipe broke. Soon water began raining into the room. The pullup men rejoiced, dancing in the downpour as though it were a fire hydrant on a scorching summer day. And, though the crowd cringed away, only a third actually left the room.

At first, the remaining crowd danced tenuously, torn between their attraction to the groove and their impulse to get out of the rain. But as it became obvious that the rain wouldn’t soon stop, the d.j. faded into “One More Chance,” which is B.I.G.’s syrupy smooth ode to his immense ability to mack—that is, get women—and a current monster hit. Suddenly, no one was dancing tenuously anymore, and, though it was raining on the dance floor, everyone seemed comfortable dancing amid the chaos. Someone yelled, “Rain, motherfucker! Rain!”

But after the second chorus of “One More Chance” the d.j. stopped spinning, and people began filtering out of the club. The party was, finally, over.

THE FINAL BOW



Mme. Chiang

Even in Washington, the capital of tributes and commemorations, it’s a rare thing to see so many politicians lined up like schoolboys to shake a lady’s hand. But that is exactly what happened a week or so ago, when Mme. Chiang Kai-shek appeared in town, at the announced age of ninety-seven. “The rush of history is so fast that being here makes me feel young again,” declared Bob Dornan, the fire-breathing representative from California. Alan Simpson, the Wyoming senator, was carrying a copy of a letter written by Mme. Chiang in 1939 from China. He dangled it between two fingers like a precious swatch of cloth. “I told her my mother loved her,” he said, speaking in his long, twangy syllables. “She was alert and she was bright. She was clicking on all cylinders.”

The last of the glamorous Soong sisters—Mme. Chiang was the youngest of the three—had been ushered into the old Senate caucus room, just minutes before, smiling tightly at the crowd around her. The occasion of her coming-out party—Mme. Chiang’s first appearance before the American press in two decades—was yet another anniversary reception marking the end of war in the Pacific. Senator Paul Simon, of Illinois, set it up after hearing from Chinese friends that she might be willing to take a final public bow. After all, in February of 1943 she’d addressed both houses of Congress separately, only the second woman ever accorded that honor. “Her slim fingers were red-tipped” was one reporter's description of her appearance back then. "She wore sheer hose and frivolous high-heeled slippers." Her outfit on this baking summer afternoon was more demure: a shawl and a silk dress, patterned in red and black, with a stiff collar done up around her neck in the traditional Mandarin style.

Mme. Chiang abandoned Taiwan after her husband's death, in 1975, and has since been living quietly and obscurely on Long Island and on the Upper East Side, with a retinue of servants and two lapdogs, Lily and Pepito. She enjoys simple Western foods, like roast chicken and biscuits, prays regularly at St. Thomas More church, on Eighty-ninth Street, and reads the *Times* every day.

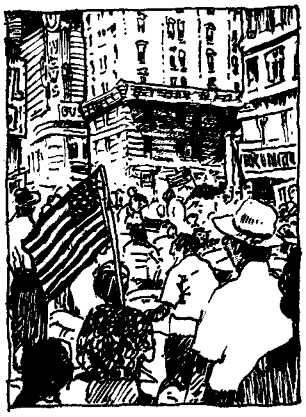
The Generalissimo's widow came into the reception on her own two feet, supported by her step-grandson, a San Francisco businessman named Eddie Chiang. She broke a hip some years ago, so a special chair bolstered with sturdy pillows had been set up for her in the front of the hall. She has always had a reputation for particularity, and once brought her own silk sheets from China, having them changed daily as a guest of the Roosevelts at the White House. Photographs of that glamorous era were set up on easels around the hall. There was Mme. Chiang in a fur coat, or chatting with a grinning Harry Truman, or distributing trinkets to American fighter pilots, or flirting, famously, on the lawn in Cairo, with Winston Churchill in his white Panama suit.

By the time Mme. Chiang began her remarks, stuffed mushroom caps and Spanish champagne were being served around the hall. She spoke to the gathering of roughly three hundred for a few minutes, no more, while sitting in her therapeutic chair behind an elaborate cordon of red-velvet ropes. Her voice came over loudspeakers, and a crowd of reporters huddled around them, with tape recorders whirring. "I will always think of America as my second home, and it is good to be back home today," she said, enunciating each word precisely and deliberately, as if she had been practicing the speech for a long while.

When she finished speaking, people surged around her, carrying old mementos for her to sign, or holding cameras, seeking a last photo opportunity with

V-J NIGHT: THE WAY IT WAS

A LEGEND has grown up that V-J Night in Times Square, August 14, 1945, produced an orgy or a riot—a scandal of some kind. I've no idea how the legend started. Perhaps the intervening years, by showing us so many images of crowds becoming mobs, created the assumption that large groups are always violent. Or possibly the famous Alfred Eisenstaedt photograph of a sailor kissing a nurse who is bent over backward, like a tango dancer, has suggested an eruption of lust. I didn't see strangers kissing, just smiling at one another. In fact, nothing—or nothing much—happened in Times Square on V-J Night. In retrospect, that nothing, like Sherlock Holmes's dog that didn't bark in the night, seems noteworthy: two million people spontaneously gathered in the heart of the city without danger or discord.



I was nineteen that summer, fresh out of college, and was working as an editorial assistant at *The New Republic*, then on East Forty-ninth Street. After work, I went out to dinner nearby with four people from the office. While we were eating, patrons arrived, smiling and nodding, and a buzz went around the room: The war was over. When dinner was finished, we walked west, heading for assorted subway lines, but once we crossed Sixth Avenue we found ourselves carried along by a stream of people moving into Times Square. It gently propelled us until, near Forty-fifth Street, we had to stop. The crowd had become solid. People had filled the streets and transformed cars into islands. The drivers didn't seem impatient. I remember seeing sailors and girls sitting on the hood of a taxi, waving. Sound as well as bodies engulfed us. The mass of people emitted a gigantic, undifferentiated drone. Once or twice, I was startled by a person close by who had brought a party noisemaker, but otherwise no single noise made any impression.

I remember the weather as pleasant, with that velvety summer-night quality. Darkness wasn't a problem. After V-E Day, in May, the lights had all come back on. What limited anyone's vision was everyone else. But there really wasn't anything to see, except the electric sign on the Times Tower.

We five stood for hours with the rest of the crowd, smiling and shuffling. When the pressure loosened briefly, we moved into an entryway between the brilliantly lit windows of a racy-lingerie store. Its would-be prurient display of black lace garter belts and brassieres with holes cut out for nipples wasn't attracting much attention. I don't remember that my group talked a lot to one another. I think the good news was just beginning to sink in, and we had no words for it. Eventually, we moved back out onto the sidewalk and, keeping close to the buildings, managed to work our way uptown. The crowd we left, well after midnight, was still calm, good-natured, and smiling—apparently not planning or expecting anything, merely content to be there.

I didn't see any policemen. I know they were there, but where I was the crowd maintained its own order. And I don't remember seeing anybody drunk, although undoubtedly people did get drunk on V-J Night. My clearest visual memory is the brightness of Broadway's lights shining down on a wall-to-wall carpet of human beings. The emotional affect that stays with me is one of serenity, security. I'd never seen a crowd like that before, and it didn't occur to me then that I'd never see another one like it again. How often does anyone see two million happy people?

—NAOMI BLIVEN

one of the original queens of the genre. Through spaces in the crowd, you could see that her hair was done up in a tight lacquered bun, with no hint of gray. She wore a bright stitch of red lipstick, and jade earrings. Big-footed security personnel stood behind her, dour Taiwanese gentlemen with wires coming from their ears. On their signal, she was helped up and escorted toward the door. The procession moved along in an ungainly way, and as the old dowager left the room she kept cocking her head back toward the crowd, giving everyone the same brittle smile, waving her last goodbyes again and again.

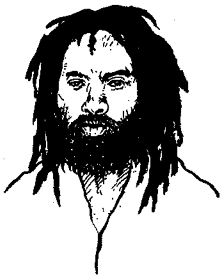
CITY PLOTTING

Mayor Giuliani's plan to sell the tiny Canarsie Cemetery has, understandably, drawn far less fanfare than his bid to privatize such glamorous properties as the city's public hospitals, say, or its municipal parking garages. But at a time when most cemeteries in New York City are nearly full, Canarsie still has four-and-a-half undeveloped acres, which is why the Mayor has deemed it an appropriate candidate for reinvention, and why, on a recent sunny afternoon, Richard Moylan eased his car up the cemetery's pitted driveway, at the corner of Remsen Avenue and Avenue K, to take a look.

Moylan is the president of Green-Wood, the haute burial ground that is home to, among others, the printmakers Nathaniel Currier and James Merritt Ives, and, as befits a man in his position, he carries himself with a certain dignity. He drove slowly past a boarded-up entrance hut, past a row of dead trees, and past a little valley in the middle of the cemetery that floods when it rains, then stopped and got out of the car in front of a new grave with a little white plastic fence around it. Inside the fence were a statue of the Virgin Mary, a plastic lamb, two artificial-flower bouquets, two American flags, and a glass-enclosed candle à la eternal flame.

"We don't permit the little plastic fences at Green-Wood," Moylan said. "They make for maintenance problems, and, personally, I think they're ugly." Glancing around, he saw graves adorned with little white marble chips and fancy plastic Madonnas and trophies in glass cases. He looked like he wanted to wash his hands. "If you start deviating from your regulations, where do you stop?" Moylan was back in his car now, heading for the exit, and suddenly this idea that cemeteries could be sold to the private sector and reinvented as easily as hospitals or parking garages seemed very improbable and far away. "I'd really have to push to sell this to our board," he said with a sigh. He recalled that the city had tried to sell off the Canarsie cemetery before—during another fiscal crisis, in the nineteen-eighties. "You know what we told them then? We said, If you give it to us free maybe we'll consider it."

LAST-MINUTE PLEAS



Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia Abu-Jamal is scheduled to be executed at 10 P.M. on August 17th. Abu-Jamal is a former Black Panther who had gone on to a successful career as a newspaperman and radio journalist in Philadelphia when he was accused of the 1981 murder of a police officer. He was found guilty and sentenced to death by lethal injection. In prison, Abu-Jamal has continued to work as a journalist, not only protesting his own innocence but documenting conditions on death row. His writings, together with the stark fact of his imminent death, have made him a global cause célèbre. At an "emergency press conference" convened last week by the PEN American Center and the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, a number of writers spoke out on the condemned man's behalf.

William Styron: In the last three-quarters of a century, several dozen Americans condemned and executed have been proved innocent after their deaths. . . . Our belief is that the trial and conviction of Abu-Jamal comprised a miscarriage of justice so deficient in minimum standards of judicial procedure, and so rife with errors, as to reduce to travesty any idea of fairness or the impartial administration of the principles of law. Under these circumstances, his innocence was not and could not be established beyond any doubt.

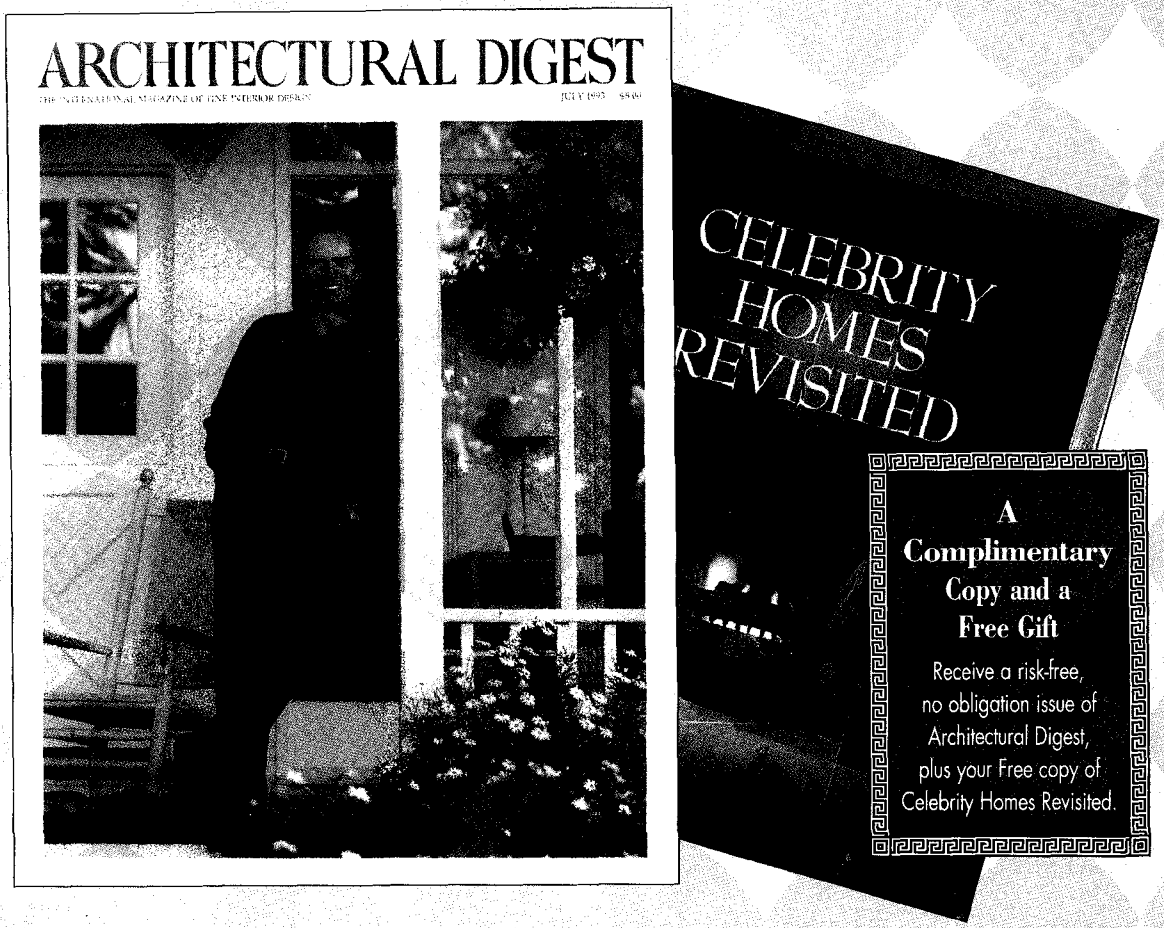
Therefore, in Pennsylvania, on August 17th, America and the world will be faced with the intolerable spectacle of the rites of state murder being enacted upon a man whose guilt has never been satisfactorily proved. Only a stay of execution, and the prompt ordering of a new trial, can prevent what is both a disgrace to justice and a human tragedy.

Paul Auster: As one American citizen to another, I would like Tom Ridge, the governor of Pennsylvania, to stop and consider the enormous power he has been given—the power to kill a man, or to allow that man to go on living. . . . The law understands that it makes mistakes, that men and women who carry out the law are imperfect creatures, and therefore the power to nullify the decisions of the law must be written into the law itself. In no instance is this more important than when the law proposed to take a man's life. That is why the appeals in such cases go directly to the governor—because the governor is assumed to be wise and just, even if the law isn't always wise and just.

Cornelius Eady, a poet, read an excerpt from Abu-Jamal's book, "Live From Death Row":

> "Somebody burnin' they hair, man! You smell that?"
>
> "I smell it, but that ain't hair—that's a blanket."
>
> "Blanket, hell. That's hair, man—human hair! Fire up!" Big Boy bellowed until others took up the call. "Fire up! Fire up!"
>
> For five frantic minutes the calls resounded, and guards, the ever-present keys ajangle, ran from cell to cell, from tier to tier, until the burning, smoking cell was located and the white, frothy liquid quenched the flames. Moments later, a naked man walked down the tier, his front darkened like wheat toast, an acrid stench rising like an infernal sacrifice. He walked slowly, deliberately, as if lost in thought, as if involved in a languid, aimless stroll on the beach.
>
> Twelve hours later he was pronounced dead, *with over 70 percent of his body burned.* He was identified as Robert Barnes, fifty-seven years old, of Delaware County, Pennsylvania. A recent transfer from Graterford prison to Huntingdon prison, the man had reportedly warned officials that if he were placed in the "hole" (disciplinary custody status) and locked down, he would kill himself.
>
> He was placed in the "hole."
>
> He killed himself. ♦

This week's contributors: Jane Mayer, John Lahr, Touré, Adam Platt, Malcolm Gladwell, James Traub.



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ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

AWESOME

Michael Eisner's comeback and his probable peace with Jeffrey Katzenberg crown a succession of mogul mergers and breakups that tops anything on TV.

BY KEN AULETTA

IN a season of media madness topped off by the announcement that the Walt Disney Company was buying Capital Cities/ABC, consider these bombshells. Since Jeffrey Katzenberg left the employ of Michael Eisner and Disney last year and announced that he and the director Steven Spielberg and the record impresario David Geffen would launch a new studio, DreamWorks SKG, otherwise cautious companies have been throwing money at them—including Cap Cities/ABC, which has committed a hundred million dollars to a joint venture. Then, in June, Seagram's chief executive officer, Edgar Bronfman, Jr., acquired MCA, and soon thereafter he also threw a bundle at DreamWorks and agreed to distribute the new studio's movies overseas and its videos worldwide. Michael Ovitz, the chairman of Creative Artists Agency, who was said to want to be as rich as his friend Michael Eisner, engaged in an excruciating courtship with Bronfman before fleeing his embrace—or did Bronfman dump him? A couple of months ago, Barry Diller again made noises about buying CBS—a move said to have been secretly encouraged by Eisner. ("That I will not comment on," Eisner says.) A close Diller associate says, "Eisner would have been willing to be a major investor in a CBS run by Barry."

Michael Eisner: "I was his leading critic," Katzenberg says. "Everybody, starting with me, was wrong."

AHMET GÖRGÜN

Another Diller adviser discloses that, with Eisner on-board, Diller received expressions of interest from Bronfman's MCA and from John Malone, of TeleCommunications, Inc., but Diller backed away because he "thought CBS was grossly overpriced at eighty dollars a share." Meanwhile, Eisner, who had known only adulation since arriving at Disney, in 1984, was being derided as too paralyzed by fear to buy, say, a television network.

For Eisner, the past year and a half has been brutal. In April of 1994, his closest business associate, Frank Wells, died in a helicopter accident. Eisner was lambasted for walking away from a deal to buy NBC. In July of 1994, while attending Allen & Company's annual mogul retreat in Sun Valley, Idaho, he suffered chest pains and subsequently underwent a quadruple-bypass operation. While he was recuperating, he and Katzenberg endured a noisy divorce. Katzenberg wanted to fill Wells's role, but Eisner thought he lacked the same sophisticated judgment, so Katzenberg left. Waves of unpleasant publicity, including bitter words from Spielberg and Geffen, drowned Eisner's good name. And, though Disney had a record-setting year, the bad publicity did not abate. By early this year, Jeffrey Katzenberg had been crowned as the new media prince; Michael Eisner was

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viewed as the frog—and the frog was unhappy.

This past April, Eisner hired a new chief financial officer, Stephen Bollenbach, and Bollenbach helped persuade him that Disney could afford to buy a network, even one whose price tag might be triple what Eisner had already refused to pay for NBC. At this year's Allen & Company retreat, Eisner would impress his peers. He dreaded running into Katzenberg and Geffen, whom he loathed. He knew that, among those who were keeping score at this summer camp for media moguls, this was the place to launch a comeback. Various communications-company C.E.O.s are asked by Herbert Allen to make morning business presentations at the retreat, and the first presentation this year was made by Bronfman. Eisner knew that Bronfman had made a good impression. "I did O.K. because of low expectations," says Bronfman, who at forty was stereotyped as the lucky heir of a family fortune. Time Warner's C.E.O., Gerald Levin, fared less well, the widespread feeling being that he was lugubrious. And, before Eisner spoke, Ronald Perelman, the chairman of New World Communications Group and of Revlon, attracted a certain amount of derisive laughter when he arrived for what had always been billed as a relaxed gathering accompanied by two beefy, grim-faced bodyguards.

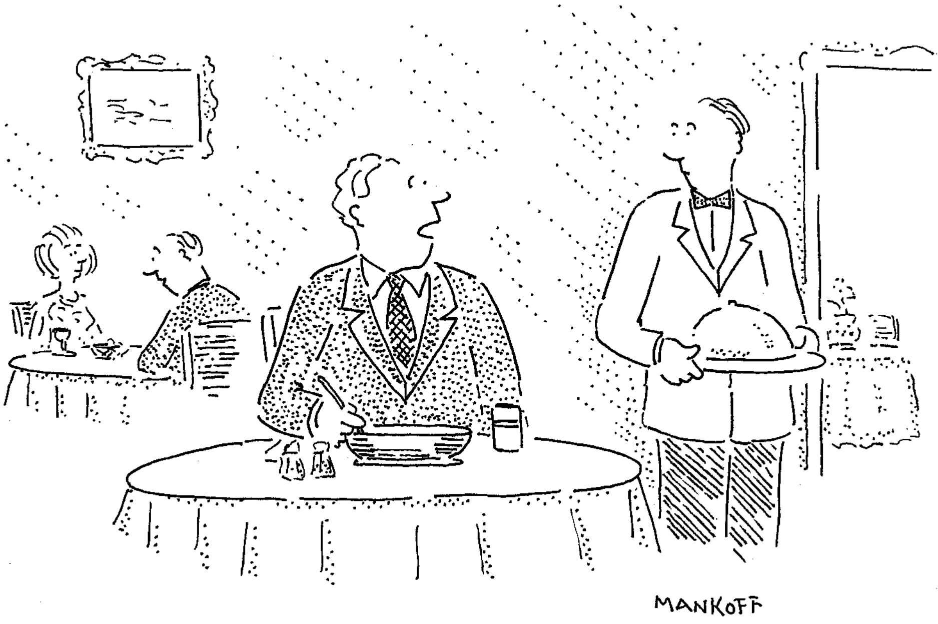
When Eisner rose to speak, he no doubt took comfort from the fact that Katzenberg was not in the room. ("I thought it would be rude to go to his presentation," Katzenberg told me.) By many accounts, Eisner dazzled his colleagues with figures on Disney's sterling financial performance, on its buoyant stock price. And he put on a show, implicitly reminding those who are sometimes disparaged as "suits" that they were in the entertainment business. "Everything he said was funny," another noted media figure says. "He really hit it out of the park." Eisner, doing what he likened to "David Letterman's Top Ten," predicted the five top rumors that would come out of the retreat this year, among them that DreamWorks would announce that it was leaving the entertainment business and entering the "corporate-alliance business," and that Universal Pictures would change the name of "Waterworld" to "Apollo 14."

One rumor that did not surface, however, was that Disney would merge with Capital Cities/ABC, creating a communications colossus. Even after Eisner was seen at the retreat huddled with Thomas Murphy, the C.E.O. of Cap Cities/ABC, and the company's chief shareholder, Warren Buffett, no one suspected that a merger was in the works.

Two weeks later, media executives were talking about little else. The day before the blockbuster announcement, ABC's counsel told Robert Iger, the Cap Cities/ABC president, "The story is out. It's leaking."

"Where?"

"Our own place. 'Good Morning America' is working on something called 'Project Mickey.' "



"Waiter! There are extreme-right-wing elements in my soup!"

Iger felt sick—until he remembered that his fiancée, Willow Bay, was substituting for co-host Joan Lunden the next day because Lunden was off interviewing Mickey Mantle.

The negotiations commenced when Eisner bumped into Warren Buffett at the Allen conference. This encounter was not an accident. "I was going to find a way at some point to make contact with Tom Murphy," Eisner said to me in a telephone interview last Thursday. Disney—as Eisner told a jammed press conference at ABC in New York last week—had conducted an internal strategy session the day before he flew to Sun Valley. Those involved agreed that Eisner would pursue Murphy and Buffett. "We've been flirting for ten years," a member of the Cap Cities/ABC board says. This time, the talks proved fruitful. Even competitors, once they've overcome the shock, stand back in awe at the deal. "It's a big win for both Disney and ABC," Sumner Redstone, Viacom's chairman, says.

Eisner's triumph has transformed him once again, from the frog back into a prince. Like Barry Diller and David Geffen, Eisner is a comparative rarity in the entertainment field—a tough businessman who is also creative. Such people are inventors and managers. But, despite Eisner's success in rejuvenating Disney, there have always been questions about qualities he was thought to lack. To many associates, he sometimes appeared insecure, insular, mistrustful. One reason that Eisner lost the services of talented executives like Katzenberg and Richard Frank, the head of Disney's TV division, who left this past March, is that he seemed to trust virtually no one. His executives urged him repeatedly to seek acquisitions, but, except for some smaller deals, like the acquisition of Miramax, he always seemed reluctant. He jeered at new technology, sometimes sounding like a philistine. "He was stating both publicly and privately how bad an idea a broadcast network was—until last Monday," Robert Wright, NBC's president, jokes.

"I was his leading critic," Katzenberg says. "Everybody on that list of critics, starting with me, was wrong. We were all wrong. And it's not as if we were a little wrong. This was a moment in time when he saw the value of a combined enterprise, the value of his stock and what he would have to pay, and he had the confidence to act. Up to now, he didn't have the confidence to do it."

Barry Diller, who was Eisner's boss when they worked at ABC, starting in the late sixties, and, later, at Paramount, and remains a friend (but sometimes shows a competitive streak), affectionately says of Eisner, "It's never been easy for Michael to buy anything. He's too cheap. But this merger says, more than anything, that he has graduated."

Once again, we are reminded how quickly certitudes change. A short time ago—in 1991—the three television networks collectively lost money. Today, everyone is buzzing about the value of a network brand name and platform. In 1993, cable, with its promised switched and digitalized interactive network, was king of the media. A year later, the telephone companies were said to be king. Now broadcasting is back. Yesterday, Katzenberg and DreamWorks were heralded as ABC's lifeline to good programming and as the domestic distributor for ABC of reruns to local stations. Today, they are allied with a company run by their onetime nemesis, Michael Eisner. Yesterday, Katzenberg was threatening to sue Eisner and Disney over the terms of their business divorce. Today, a Katzenberg intimate confides, he expects an amicable settlement. Yesterday, Michael Ovitz was hailed as the most powerful executive in Hollywood, the agent who so brilliantly negotiated deals for others because he was always clear about what he wanted. Yet he was ambivalent when he was negotiating for himself to run MCA—seemingly wanting to leave the agent business but not wanting to work for someone else. So Ovitz remained where he was while his partner, Ron Meyer, decided to leave to become president and chief operating officer of MCA. Barry Diller and Ovitz both say that they are contented, but both are watching the field and waiting, perhaps hoping that the Time Warner board will oust Gerald Levin and turn to one of them.

THE recent media madness serves as yet another reminder that the most powerful executives are also proud men. As communications-company leaders become the objects of intense media attention, they assume the trappings of show business, entering a realm where they are judged as hits or flops, players or spectators. Michael Eisner didn't just want to do a deal. He wanted vindication. And, understandably, he wanted to be known as a winner again.

Of course, there were compelling business reasons for Disney and Cap Cities/ABC to join forces. "For the first time, a studio is directly attached to one of the Big Three networks," Michael Ovitz says. "This gives Disney distribution of its product, and amazing vertical clout." To put it another way, although capitalists proclaim their devotion to competition, their real mission is to maximize profits by minimizing risks. Eisner now runs a company that manufactures a product, owns the network distribution system for it, and controls how long the product stays on the network (one source of revenue), thus banking a vast supply of episodes to be sold to local stations in the incredibly profitable rerun market (a second source of revenue), whose programs can be cross-promoted and also shown on the Disney cable channels (a third source of revenue), which seeds interest in the bustling overseas marketplace (a fourth source of revenue), and whose products can be translated into Disney merchandise (a fifth source of revenue).

Since the announcement of the merger, much has been said about the network as a distribution system. But, thanks to newly relaxed government rules, a network is more than a mere distributor. Networks are now permitted to produce their own shows and are expected to be soon permitted to sell those shows and to own more of the stations that carry those shows; in other words, a network can own both the water and the pipe. "I believe that what people are missing is that a network is no longer about distribution," says Alan Schwartz, the investment-banking chief at Bear Stearns, who is a longtime adviser of Eisner's and was retained by Disney to serve as an adviser on the merger. "A network is about programming. In communications, if your company does not grow and consolidate with others, then you run the risk of lacking the outlets to justify spending for a quality product. By consolidating, you can sell your product to your network, to your cable channel, as reruns, as merchandise, as overseas product. There are now so many more ways to get paid for it."

In turn, consolidation brings leverage, as Eisner noted at last week's press conference. Cap Cities/ABC's sports channel, ESPN, already has a beachhead in a hundred and thirty-five countries, he said, and "nonpolitical" sports and family entertainment can be sold in a package. The broad appeal of sports and, say, Disney cartoons can be a wedge to promote the sale of other Disney products. Consolidation also introduces another concept much in vogue: synergy. "I am totally optimistic that one and one will add up to four here," Eisner declared at the merger announcement. Eisner has a record of achievement in this regard. Katzenberg, who is undoubtedly sincere but is also shrewd enough to want to appear magnanimous, says, "Most people talk synergy. At Disney, Michael made it work."

Critics have reason to worry that consolidation will translate into monopolistic practices. They ask whether, as distribution systems become more plentiful—over-the-air broadcasting, telephone wires, cable wires, direct-broadcast satellite dishes, wireless transmission, the computer—giant software companies like Disney will hog so much product that they will assume the attributes of a monopoly gatekeeper.

News poses a related concern. Eisner has no natural predilection for journalism. He tends to take a dim view of reporters; last week, he thanked several journalists for generally favorable pieces, as if they were choosing his side rather than just reporting his coup, and he tends to freeze out those whom he views as critics. Now that Eisner will have responsibility for the most successful broadcast-news division as well as Cap Cities/ABC's newspapers and magazines—more than a hundred publications—the questions that are already being asked about him are these: Does he care about the news product, or only about profit margins? Does he feel some public-trust obligation—as ABC obviously did earlier this year when it broadcast a low-rated prime-time hour on the war in Bosnia because the story was important—or does he only track ratings? Will he find that news, with its attendant controversy and sometimes uncomfortable questions, detracts from the friendly Disney image? Whatever the flaws of Murphy and Daniel Burke, the former C.E.O. of Cap Cities/ABC, as longtime broadcasters they often displayed an almost religious belief in the sanctity of network news. Will Eisner? "ABC News is the best news organization in the world," Eisner told me. "I know it well. Roone Arledge has brought to ABC News the same kind of invention that he brought to ABC Sports. They will be left alone to operate autonomously."

And what will Eisner do about Katzenberg? "The dynamic there is one part rational and one part psychological," a Cap Cities/ABC executive observes. On the rational side, Disney can of course provide Saturday-morning programming for ABC, despite the contract with DreamWorks, and also control domestic distribution of it, which would reduce DreamWorks' role. As a business matter, Eisner cannot be pleased that Cap Cities/ABC agreed to eventually share network ad revenues with DreamWorks.The psychological part involves Eisner and Katzenberg. On July 31st, when Katzenberg was asked about the status of DreamWorks' relationship with the new ABC, he said, "We have no idea." To seek clarification, he cancelled a scheduled dinner with Viacom's Sumner Redstone, and instead he and Geffen met Monday evening with Robert Iger, who will continue, under Eisner, to oversee the Cap Cities/ABC properties. By midweek, Katzenberg and his partners were hinting that they might go elsewhere. DreamWorks does have a clause in its contract allowing it to leave if there is a change in ownership at ABC. However, by the end of the first week in August, Eisner had approached Katzenberg, Geffen, and Spielberg. Eisner has told associates that Katzenberg said to him, "Michael, we have nineteen great years together, and we've had ten terrible months. Let's not make it eleven."

Eisner agreed. So did David Geffen, who in the past had verbally savaged Eisner. "The relationship will likely be different," Geffen told me on August 4th. "But I expect there will be a relationship with ABC."

THE impact of the Disney-ABC announcement can be better understood when it is contrasted with an event that occurred the day after Eisner sprang his surprise: the proposed sale of CBS to Westinghouse. Unlike ABC, NBC, and Fox, which elbowed into cable and other businesses that provide growth opportunities, CBS, with Laurence Tisch as chairman, shed its nonbroadcasting assets. Tisch refused to expand, and Westinghouse can't afford to. "With Westinghouse, we simply add to what we already have," a ranking—and depressed—CBS executive says. "The fear is that this will be a highly leveraged deal, and that, consequently, this new company won't have the money to go out and extend itself. In the last four, five years, if we went to Larry and asked him to extend our business—to start a cable network—he would just no you to death. Now we won't even have to go and get a no. There might not be any money."

Of course, there are benefits for both sides in the Westinghouse-CBS deal. Between them, they own twelve TV stations and thirty-nine radio stations, providing more sales and distribution muscle than either had alone, and fresh opportunities for cost savings. But real money is made from product. Without the resources of Disney or General Electric, which owns NBC, the new CBS cannot easily expand from distribution to manufacturing. It is worth noting that the expected profits of the CBS network this year (exclusive of its seven TV stations)—about a hundred million dollars, a knowledgeable CBS official says—pale in comparison with ABC's four hundred and fifty million dollars.

So why did Michael H. Jordan, the C.E.O. of Westinghouse, push so hard to consummate this deal? Again, vanity played a role. After failing for two years to transform Westinghouse into a growth company, Jordan, a former McKinsey & Company partner, desperately wanted to change the subject. By acquiring CBS, he instantly becomes part of the new Hollywood—a Master of the Universe, in Tom Wolfe's phrase about the Wall Street players of the eighties. He receives a shower of publicity and, no doubt, an invitation to the next Allen & Company conference.

Westinghouse may, of course, be outbid. Those with deeper pockets but no ownership of one of the Big Three networks—companies like Time Warner, Viacom, Sony, MCA, and Turner Broadcasting—are shaken by Eisner's move. Not only did Eisner's play succeed offensively, it also put competitors on the defensive. With NBC acting like a buyer, not a seller, competitors know that CBS is the last available network prize. Yet Turner and Time Warner and Viacom are hobbled by huge debt, and so are unlikely to top Westinghouse's bid for CBS—five billion four hundred million dollars. Turner and Time Warner are also burdened by partners with interests that are difficult to synchronize. Under current federal regulations, Sony, as a foreign-owned entity, may not claim more than twenty-five-per-cent ownership of a broadcast station. As a Canadian company, Seagram has a similar impediment. And, after its recent acquisition of MCA, Bronfman says, "I can think of lots of ways to grow our company. At the moment, we earn next to nothing from television. So the idea of spending five to six billion dollars buying a TV network has no appeal to me"—not at the present time, anyway, he added. What might have appeal to studios seeking access to a major network is an investment in CBS alongside Westinghouse.

The Disney move also puts pressure on existing network owners, like Rupert Murdoch, with Fox, and GE, with NBC. Murdoch, with his ownership of satellite-distribution systems in Europe and Asia, leads the race to build a global network. But he cannot match the combination of Disney and ABC as a software factory. Already, Fox executives are said to be discussing whether to create a sports network to challenge ESPN. For NBC, there are also decisions to make. Last year, GE tried—but failed—to become partners with Turner and Time Warner. Will Disney provoke GE and NBC to seek a megapartner? "If we could be involved with Time Warner in some significant way, I'd be very happy," Wright, NBC's president, concedes, adding, "These announcements may bring people back to the table."

There will be a lot of frenzied activity and many rumors, as business leaders again prove that they panic just like the rest of us. New Masters of the Universe will come and go, but for the moment Michael Eisner occupies center stage alone. ♦

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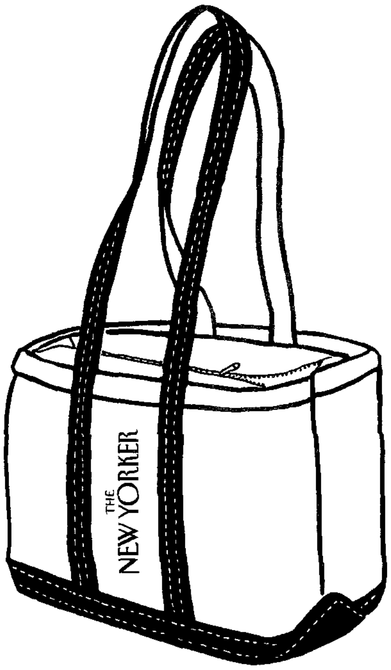

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OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

ALONE WITH THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The author travelled with Boutros Boutros-Ghali during the week when the United Nations was suffering one of its greatest humiliations.

BY MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

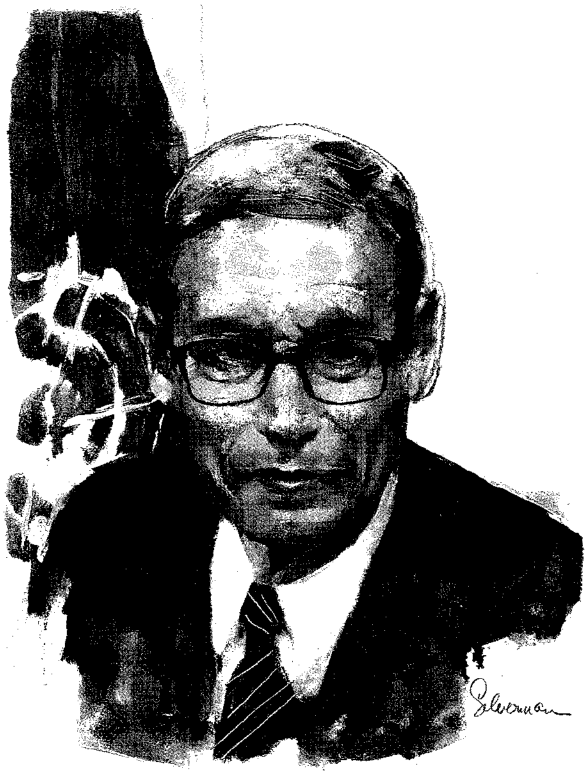
Thursday, July 13, 1995: Boutros Boutros-Ghali's plane is heading south from Cairo, a small, cramped executive jet, a crush of luggage and people—his team of seven, plus three journalists. I have been called forward for a briefing. He is an intense, wiry, sallow-skinned man in his seventies, sitting alone in a window seat, looking out at the Sudanese desert. He wants to talk about Africa. I want to talk about Bosnia.

Srebrenica has just fallen. Dutch peacekeepers have been taken hostage. Women and children, after walking across the battle lines, have arrived in Tuzla; Bosnian Serb soldiers have captured all Muslim males between the ages of fifteen and fifty-five and led them away to unknown destinations. The United Nations' mission has been humiliated. Why doesn't the Secretary-General cancel this trip, I ask, and fly back to the U.N.?

Because if I do, he says, all the African countries will tell the world that while there is genocide in Africa—a million people have died in Rwanda—the Secretary-General pays attention only to a village in Europe. "Sre*bree*niska" is how he pronounces its name, in a low, raspy Levantine accent.

He once vowed to defend the "safe haven," but the Dutch, who have peacekeepers on the ground, vetoed further air strikes. Now the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is erecting a tent city in Tuzla, airfreighting food and hooking up water pipes—in effect, collaborating, yet again, in the ethnic cleansing of eastern Bosnia.

At least forty thousand soldiers were needed to mount a credible defense of the safe havens. Only seven thousand were made available by the member states. I cannot make out whether the Secretary-General believes that, with so few resources, a defense was even possible.



When Boutros-Ghali became Secretary-General, in 1992, the U.N. had four thousand peacekeepers. Now, a mere three years later, it has more than seventy thousand.

BURT SILVERMAN

Why call them safe havens if they are never safe? Why call UNPROFOR a protection force when it cannot protect itself? And why insist on being neutral, in the face of a clear aggressor and a clear victim, when that neutrality daily undermines the United Nations' moral credit?

"We are not able to intervene on one side. The mandate does not allow it," he says. He is vehement.

I wonder what kind of alibi this is. A Secretary-General has little power, but he does have moral authority. I'm on the

"Everything I have, son, I have because your grandfather left it to me. I see now that that was a bad thing."

• •

plane to see what use he makes of it, and I happen to have chosen the week when that authority seems to be at its most compromised, when Bosnia risks becoming what Abyssinia was for the League of Nations: the foreign field where honor is lost beyond recall.

Nothing in his robust good humor suggests that he regards the moment as darkly as I do. He's had worse weeks. He is philosophical about his moral authority: it is by definition a wasting asset. Look, he says, we are negotiators. Nobody likes negotiators: parties to any dispute always find it convenient to blame us for their own failings. If the United Nations has failed in Bosnia, he implies, it is because no one—not the Muslims or the Serbs or the great powers—has allowed it to do the job it is capable of doing; if the U.N. is still there, it is because the great powers believe that the alternatives are more disagreeable.

The Secretary-General taps a blue file on the table in front of him. It is full of cables from Zagreb, Belgrade, New York. He has just got off the phone with his special envoy to Bosnia, Yasushi Akashi, and the U.N. mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg. The Secretary-General is in touch.

He says, "If we had not been there, it would have been worse." The war has not spread to Macedonia or Kosovo, and two million eight hundred thousand refugees have been fed and clothed and sheltered. "We have to do our work under terrible emotional pressure," he says, "especially from the media. No one realizes how long it takes for people to come to their senses." Remember how long it took, he reminds me, before the Israelis and the P.L.O. finally sat down to talk peace?

All this is true, but it does not change the fact that promises were made to people in a village in Europe which should never have been made, because those who made them knew the promises could not be kept.

It may not matter greatly if this thought keeps the Secretary-General awake at night, but I am curious to know if it does. He gives nothing away, of course. A man in his position cannot afford *états d'âme.* It is beside the point to ask about his moods. He keeps them to himself. One can assume only that years of diplomacy and a life as a patrician member of Egypt's Coptic minority have taught him self-containment. His is a heavily fortified personality. But then, unexpectedly, he confesses, "Everywhere we work, we are struggling against the culture of death."

Failure in Yugoslavia, such a phrase implies, is relative. If you think we have failed in Yugoslavia, he seems to be saying, look at the places where we have not been able to intervene: the culture of death stalks Afghanistan, Chechnya, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, too, and we do nothing. He calls these "the orphaned conflicts"—the ones that the West, selective and promiscuous in its attention, happens to ignore in favor of that village in Europe.

Did I suppose that Srebrenica or Sarajevo was the first place the United Nations had failed? The Secretary-General recalls the fate of Beirut. He had friends there—civilized and tolerant people, who believed in the same multicultural illusions as the people of Sarajevo. The West was content to watch that city tear itself apart. That was twenty years ago. Why should we assume that such a thing will not happen again? He wants me to understand that this is not cynicism, exactly—just a sober understanding of how things are. Besides, there are places worse than Sarajevo, worse than Srebrenica, and he is going to take me to a few of them.

FRIDAY, JULY 14TH: Nyarubuye, Rwanda. One by one, four white United Nations helicopters appear over the banana trees and settle down on a burned-grass circle at the center of a Catholic missionary compound. Two bodyguards with AK-47s fan out beneath the rotor blades of the Secretary-General's helicopter, followed by a third bodyguard with Boutros-Ghali's flak jacket wrapped inside an overcoat. Huddled against low brick buildings stand a cluster of barefoot villagers, their faces gray with the dust kicked up by the helicopters. Some are holding up plywood placards stencilled in English. One placard reads, "Where was the U.N. before the genocide?" The Secretary-General steps down from the helicopter and walks past them, his head bent.

The Hutu militia known as the Interahamwe ("We who strike together") arrived at this Catholic mission community in April, 1994. They then separated the Hutus from the Tutsis and systematically slaughtered the Tutsis. Tutsis were hacked to death while cowering behind the pews of the church or under the desks in the classrooms, or while hiding in the swamp in the valley below, or while climbing into trees. When the militia grew tired of killing, they immobilized their victims by slicing the tendons of their arms and legs, went off to rest, and returned later to finish the job.

When the Rwanda Patriotic Front, the Tutsi bush army, retook the area in May, the survivors returned from hiding in Tanzania. They then made a decision so astonishing that it was at first hard to credit. They decided to leave the corpses—in their thousands—where they lay: between the church pews, beneath the school desks, in the yard outside. The survivors turned the church compound at Nyarubuye into the Yad Vashem of African genocide.

The Secretary-General is led to the doorway of a long, low room that was once used for Bible study. Stretched out on the floor are row upon row of dust-covered skeletons in rags. A dirty light slants across femurs, ankles, hipbones, shoulder joints, teeth, skulls. No flesh remains. There is no smell of putrefaction. The clothing has faded to the color of ash.

Boutros-Ghali is taken to an impromptu memorial, a small tin shed the size of a phone booth, where someone has swept together a pile of bones, fragments of cloth, and dry grass. His guards hand him a wreath, and he places it on this little heap. He stands for a minute and is photographed. He bows, shuts his eyes, then moves away.

He is led up a red dirt road to the latrines, where, even today, more than a year after the killing, the survivors are still digging out corpses. The Secretary-General peers into the stinking darkness, then steps away to draw breath. The expression on his face is of a man withdrawing as deep into himself as he can.

At the foot of the church steps, survivors sit in the dirt awaiting the Secretary-General. There are about a hundred, their faces upturned, silent. They may not know exactly who a Secretary-General is, but they know what he is doing: in any language, it is penance. When the massacres began, there was a substantial Belgian United Nations detachment in Rwanda. At the time, Hutu radio broadcasts from Kigali incited the Interahamwe to genocide; the detachment could have shut down the radio stations. Machete-toting gangs roamed the streets; U.N. tanks could have stopped them. But action of this sort was, in the language of the United Nations, "beyond the mandate." Then, in April, 1994, ten peacekeepers were tortured and killed, and the Belgian detachment withdrew. U.N. soldiers remained and protected those who took shelter with them, but they were unable to stop the slaughter beyond their gates. And now, a year later, the United Nations feeds and clothes the Hutu Interahamwe—across the border in Zaire, in the refugee camps of Goma.

When the Secretary-General talks to the survivors gathered at his feet, he ad-

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mits that he has failed them. He says that he appealed to dozens of countries to send contingents to stop the genocide and no one responded until it was too late. Even so, he tells them that "the international community" has not forgotten them. He promises that the guilty ones will not escape. They will be rounded up in Zaire, Uganda, and Tanzania, and they will be punished. The survivors listen, but it is only when they hear one particular sentence translated that they applaud: "They will be punished."

After the helicopter lifts away the Secretary-General, I remain behind and listen to the survivors talking among themselves. At least he came, one says, and he expressed sorrow. Yes, that is true, someone else says. But he did not listen. He did not ask any of the survivors to speak. They know the murderers' names. They were once neighbors, even friends. The survivors need justice now, as much as they need bread, and they do not believe they will get it. And those untranslated words of consolation the old man had shouted—*Courage! Courage! Courage!*—before he walked away to the helicopter. They were French for something, but nobody knows what they mean.

SATURDAY, JULY 15TH: Luanda, Angola. From Rwanda, the Secretary-General's executive jet flies three hours west and south to Angola. The United Nations is monitoring a ceasefire that it brokered last year between Jonas Savimbi's UNITA guerrilla army and President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos's government forces. In the annals of modern senselessness, Angola's civil war ranks as among the most savage. Well over half a million people died. Such a civil war could not have been sustained by its participants alone. The Americans and the South Africans backed Savimbi, and the Russians and the Cubans backed Dos Santos. In twenty years of intermittent warfare, these two sides turned a huge oil-rich ex-colony of Portugal, with enormous undeveloped potential, into one of Africa's more devastated wastelands.

In front of the Meridien Presidente Hotel, where the Secretary-General is staying, a small posse of amputee children scrabbles about in the dirty square. One child has fashioned a crutch from a chair leg; another, who has no legs, drags his body along with his hands. They fight to hold on to their pitch: outside the Meridien Presidente, there are always U.N. shoes to shine and the hubcaps of U.N. Landcruisers to polish.

In Angola, it is possible to imagine what would happen in Bosnia if the United Nations pulled out. The Americans would arm the Muslims, just as they armed Savimbi; the Russians would arm the Serbs, just as they armed Dos Santos. The two sides would then be so perfectly balanced, so adequately munitioned, that they could fight each other down to the last amputee child.

In Angola, now that both sides have destroyed the place they were fighting to rule, they have accepted a deal, and the United Nations has arrived, seven thousand strong, to keep that deal from coming unstuck. The U.N. needs Angola. After Bosnia, after Somalia, after Rwanda, the U.N. needs a success, and it is already claiming that it has achieved one here. But can it be a success at such a price?

Angola tells you a lot about what has happened to the United Nations since this Secretary-General took over, in 1992. Then there were four thousand peacekeepers worldwide; now, a mere three years later, there are more than seventy thousand. Wherever the Secretary-General goes, he commands assets on the ground which most heads of state would envy: tanks, troops, helicopters, Landcruisers, satellite dishes, convoys of trucks.

Twenty years ago, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees consisted of some lawyers in Geneva revising and amending the international conventions concerning refugees. Now it is a global rapid-reaction force capable of putting fifty thousand tents into an airfield anywhere within twenty-four hours, or feeding a million refugees in Zaire. Forty years ago, the World Food Program did not exist. Now it is capable of sustaining the populations of whole countries. The United Nations has become the West's mercy mission to the flotsam of failed states left behind by the ebb tide of empire.

The United Nations once oversaw discrete development projects. Now it takes over the political and administrative infrastructure of entire nations and rebuilds them from scratch. Angola is the latest laboratory experiment in the rebuilding of failed states, after Mozambique, El Salvador, Haiti, Namibia, and Cambodia. Through the desolate, garbage-strewn avenues of Luanda, well-paid civil servants from a dozen countries rush from meeting to meeting in white Landcruisers. These lords of poverty do not see themselves as the new imperialists of the post-Cold War era. They talk the jargon of development: building "local capacity," strengthening "indigenous initiative." But there is an imperial premise at work here: wealthy strangers are taking upon themselves the right to rule over those too poor, too conflict-ridden, to rule themselves. If it is an imperialism, is it benign? Only if it succeeds: if Angola learns to rule itself, and these well-paid agents of the international conscience do themselves out of a job. But no one knows whether it will succeed.

And the omens are not auspicious. Ceasefire violations are multiplying. Military chiefs have already set themselves up as local warlords. Although roads are de-mined by day, they are often re-mined at night. Few refugees have returned home. "Momentum" is a favorite word of Boutros-Ghali's. He is here to get some momentum started again.

At the end of a round of talks, President Dos Santos offers the Secretary-General the Presidential 707 to fly up to meet Savimbi, the President's arch-enemy, in his highland stronghold of Bailundo. On the way there, Boutros-Ghali invites the press into the 707's executive lounge, with its blue leather swivel chairs, liquor cabinet, and conference table. The splendor confirms the general rule that the more miserable the country the more luxurious its Presidential jet.

But Angola is not on everyone's mind as we fly to meet Savimbi. The British have convened a conference in London to decide the Western military response to the fall of Srebrenica.

ONE MORNING

Looking for distinctive stones, I found the dead otter
rotting by the tide line, and carried all day the scent of his savage
valediction. That headlong high sound the oystercatcher makes
came echoing through the rocky cove
where a cormorant was feeding and submarining in the bay
and a heron rose off a boulder where he'd been invisible
and drifted a little and stood again—a hieroglyph of forever
or just longevity reflecting on itself
between the sky clouding over and the lightly ruffled water.

This was the morning after your dream of dying, of being held
and told it didn't matter. A butterfly went jinking over
the wave-silky stones, and where I turned
to go up the road again, a couple in a blue camper sat
smoking cigarettes over their breakfast coffee (blue
smell of smoke, the thick dark smell of fresh coffee)
and talking in quiet voices, first one then the other answering,
their radio telling the daily news behind them. It was warm,
all seemed at peace, I could feel the sun coming off the water.

—Eamon Grennan

The Americans are talking about "disproportionate" air strikes directed at Bosnian Serb command-and-control. They want to take approval of air strikes out of the hands of the Secretary-General. He is resisting. If he loses his veto power, he will lose the leverage he still has to manage the military and diplomatic response to the crisis. I ask him if he is feeling marginalized by the turn of events. "Not at all." Is he dismayed by the increasing disarray among the Western powers? He makes a wry face. "The disagreement is now more in the open."

I ask him how he reacts when he sees the Americans, the French, and the British attempting to intimidate the Serbs with threats of air strikes and then, a moment later, talking of withdrawal. He won't speak ill of member states in public, yet it is obvious from his manner that the frantic talk of withdrawal has taxed his patience.

"Withdraw from what?" he asks. To withdraw from Srebrenica or Zepa is one thing, and to withdraw from Sarajevo is another. And if you withdraw from Bosnia do you also withdraw from Croatia and Macedonia? And if you withdraw who will bring the parties to the negotiating table? "I am looking for answers to these questions," he says, and he taps the blue Yugoslav file.

The Presidential jet lands at Huambo, and the party switches to Beechcrafts for a thirty-minute flight to Savimbi's red dirt runway at Bailundo. As we touch down, teen-age guerrillas festooned with shiny bullet bandoliers peer out from mud shacks amid the banana trees. As the dust cloud settles behind our Beechcraft, a big man in a night-club bouncer's white jacket and black shirt and sporting an eagle-topped cane walks over to embrace the Secretary-General. It is Savimbi. They drive off together in a black Mercedes. Stuck on the dashboard is a Savimbi totem: a large, brown-and-white striped plastic dog. Its head bobs up and down as the limousine pulls away from the landing strip.

Later, in the photo call, held in a lugubrious strawberry-pink basement in a ragged strip of buildings that passes for downtown Bailundo, Boutros-Ghali pats Savimbi's hand and calls him "my dear old friend." This is a curious phrase, for United Nations resolutions on Angola have laid a large portion of the blame for the carnage that overtook Angola after 1992 squarely on the shoulders of the dear old friend.

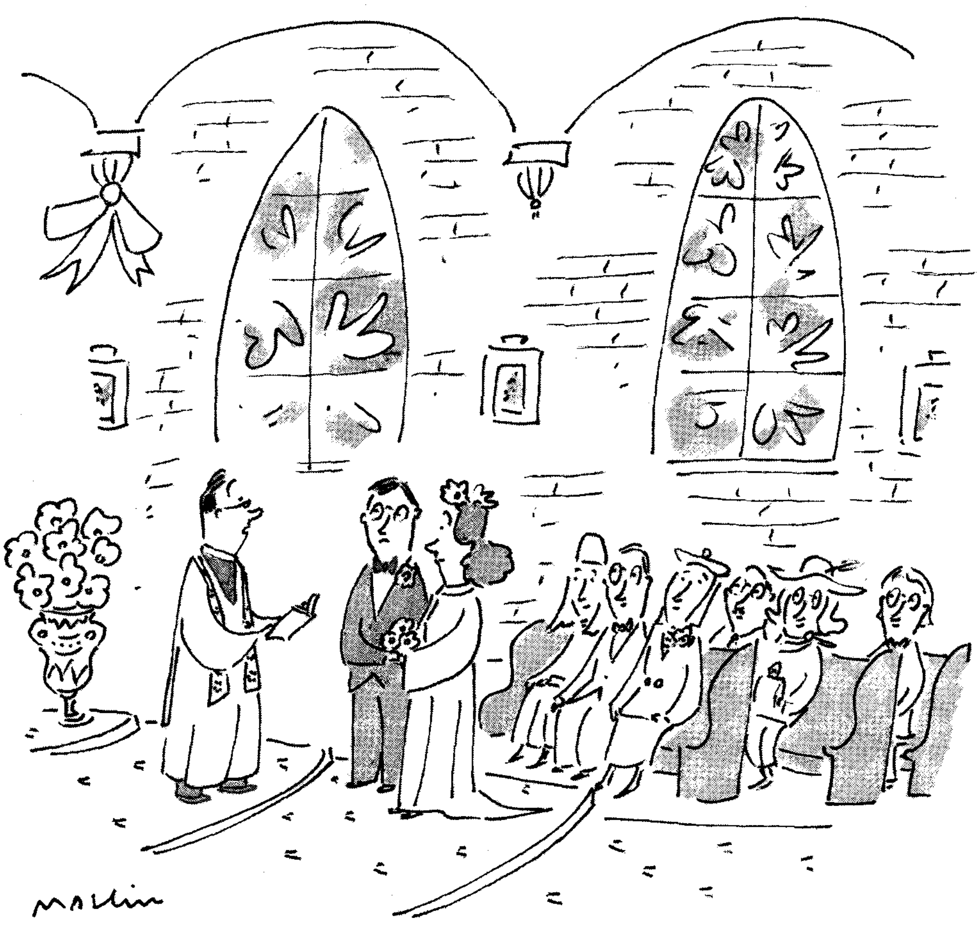
Later, I ask Boutros-Ghali why the mantle of the Secretary-General's approval has to be cast on such shoulders as Savimbi's. He gives me a mocking glance, as if to say that my scruples are beside the point: the family of nations is run largely by men with blood on their hands. Besides, the peace process in Angola is behind schedule. One massacre at a crossroads could start the madness up again. There are people in Savimbi's camp who want to return to the bush and fight. The rewards for coöperating with the peace process need to be spelled out. Savimbi must be stroked.

At the press conference, after the stroking is concluded, Boutros-Ghali catches sight of a banner at the back of the room which reads, "True peace is the one in the hearts of men." There *is* peace in the hearts of men, the Secretary-General purrs as he places his arm around Savimbi. The journalists in the back of the room roll their eyes. On the plane, Boutros-Ghali shrugs, smiles his knowing smile. You have to encourage people. You have to make people believe, yes, even that there is peace in their hearts.

SUNDAY, JULY 16TH: Gbadolite, Zaire. After Angola, Boutros-Ghali's plane crosses central Africa and touches down in the heart of the equatorial forests of Zaire. President Mobutu wishes a tête-à-tête.

But the President, we are told, is still at Mass. So we cool our heels in his guest palace, a suburban bungalow in a heavily guarded compound in the middle of the forest. Boutros-Ghali walks about, looks at his watch, runs his hands over Mobutu's collection of gold African figurines on their cool white marble plinths. CNN is airing its news summary on a giant color screen in the corner: Zepa has come under attack; the Ukrainian U.N. contingent's bunker is surrounded. Boutros-Ghali watches, his face emptied of all expression. Then he gets up and—the only moment when I see him step out of character—says, "This is globalization," as if he, too, appreciated the sudden weirdness of watching a CNN account of the fall of another European village, here in the jungles of Zaire.

Ten minutes pass. Then twenty minutes. Why are we kept waiting? I ask



"And will you, Arthur, love, honor, and agree with Martha that Sean Connery's James Bond was the best James Bond?"

• •

one of the Secretary-General's aides. Because, he whispers, Mobutu is king.

A stretch Cadillac eventually draws up outside. It whisks the Secretary-General away—we follow in a bus—and past the mud huts of Mobutu's villagers to a marble mansion on a mountaintop. Musical fountains are playing on a granite esplanade in front of the house, and we are invited to admire an uninterrupted hundred-and-eighty-degree panorama of the steaming equatorial jungle stretched out in front of us. Suddenly, Mobutu is there in person, in a cream-colored business suit stretched tight at the seams. He is wearing thick-rimmed sunglasses and his leopard-skin hat. He leans his weight on a silver-topped cane. As he greets the women in the Secretary-General's party, he murmurs "*Enchanté, Madame*," to each, and grazes the tops of their hands with his lips. Indoors, we are allowed to admire the gleaming gray marble floors, the Gobelin tapestries, the Louis XVI furniture, the Grundig television, the sparkling chandeliers, the industrial-size whiskey bottles in the drinks trolley. Then we are ushered out, and the tête-à-tête begins.

When, forty-five minutes later, we are invited back in, Mobutu draws over two big men in suits and, as he squeezes Boutros-Ghali's arm, says that these men, his ministers, will stand witness to what he has promised. Then an amusing thought occurs to him. He could always have them shot, in which case no one would ever remember his promise. But then, he says, with a wide grin at the Secretary-General, "you might make difficulties about human rights." The faces of the ministers are set in the uncomfortable rictus of courtiers, while Boutros-Ghali allows himself a thin smile.

This is the job, I think, and if you are Secretary-General you make the following calculation: Mobutu is bad, but Zaire without Mobutu will be worse; Zaire is the next African time bomb waiting to explode; so you deal with the devil you know.

MONDAY, JULY 17TH: Bujumbura, Burundi. The tour is in its fifth day, and the only one who doesn't look exhausted is the briskly energetic seventy-two-year-old at the center of it. I never see him relaxing—I've never seen his tie loosened—and this morning he appears, bursting from an elevator, with his stooped and slightly hunched gait. The members of his entourage behind him are exhausted: you can see them in the corridors of the Hôtel Source du Nil, long after midnight, in their dressing gowns, taking cables into his rooms, fielding calls from New York, their beds strewn with paper. He drives them hard. His American security guard, an ex-policeman from Darien, Connecticut, recalls the days with Pérez de Cuéllar or Waldheim, when there was time for sightseeing on the tours. "Not with this one," he sighs. "When he looks down the schedule and spots a visit to the zoo, out it goes. In goes another meeting."

Burundi is one of those small, forgettable places which earn the international community's attention because of their propensity for self-destruction. Boutros-Ghali has flown into Bujumbura, a little town on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, in order to try to talk the Burundian political élite back to its senses. A Tutsi minority, long in power, and in control of the Army, has been forced by the arrival of multiparty democracy to share power with the Hutu majority. A Hutu finally came to power as President in 1993, only to be assassinated. In the succession of massacres that followed, a hundred thousand people, Hutu and Tutsi alike, are thought to have died.

To stop Burundi from disintegrating, the Secretary-General appointed a special representative, Ahmed Ould Abdallah, an indefatigable fifty-five-year-old Mauritanian diplomat, who bears himself with the regal imperiousness of a Saharan chieftain. In April, 1994, on the night that the plane carrying the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi was shot down over Kigali airport, Abdallah went on radio and television to prevent false rumors from precipitating a bloodbath. He sat up all night with the Army chief of staff, phoning every one of the local commanders and ordering them to remain in barracks. Most observers credit Abdallah with saving Burundi from the genocidal frenzy that overtook Rwanda next door.

There are no peacekeepers in Burundi, and Abdallah doesn't want any. "What we need here is psychiatrists," he says. "I meet the politicians every day. They are all frightened of each other. When I shake their hands, they are dripping with sweat. There is not one who would not murder another for the sake of an hour of political power."

Abdallah is under no illusions: nearly two years of frantic work may have done nothing more than slow an inertial slide into the abyss. Three nights before, the sister of a Tutsi member of his own staff was ambushed by the Hutu militia on a highway south of the city, along with her Army-officer husband. The husband was mutilated. The wife, eight months pregnant, was disembowelled.

The gangs that do these things are mostly in the pay of the local politicians. Abdallah has their phone numbers. From his heavily guarded residence, overlooking Lake Tanganyika, he calls them continually. "You must keep them busy, or they will get into mischief." What he says to the politicians is always the same: take responsibility for what is happening; behave like adults; stop the reprisals; if you do not, you will end up being destroyed by what you unleash.

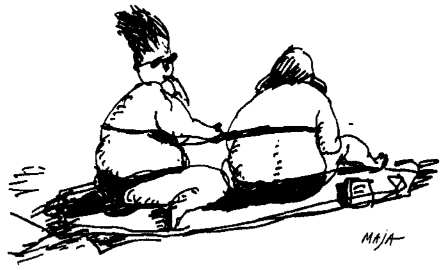
I go out with him on tour in his armored car through Bujumbura's ethnically cleansed neighborhoods to talk to the adolescents with the Kalashnikovs and grenades, who for the price of a few beers will fire bomb a street. He gets out and confronts them, telling them that the cycle of murder and counter-murder must stop, or they will all be swept away. No one seems to find it astonishing that a United Nations ambassador should be personally policing the wild zones of a small African city. But there is no one else with the resources or the credibility to do so. It is an experiment: preventive diplomacy as a way of stopping the spiral of inter-ethnic killing.

I am invited to sit in on the process of preventive diplomacy at work. Boutros-Ghali is at the head of a baize table in his hotel and listens to the Hutu and Tutsi leadership, ranged on opposite sides, facing each other. The Hutus insist that the Tutsi-dominated Army is waging a campaign of extermination; the Tutsis say that night attacks by Hutu extremists have rendered all constitutional dialogue impossible. The atmosphere in the room thickens with accusation, counter-accusation, stares, and contempt.

Boutros-Ghali says nothing until everyone has finished speaking. He then tells them that they make him ashamed to call himself an African. You seem to assume, he says, staring along the two rows of eyes that will not meet each other, that the international community will save you. You are deceived. Remember Beirut. Many good friends of mine died there, deceived by the same assumption. The international community is quite content to let you massacre each other to the last man. The donor community is fatigued. It is tired of having to save societies that seem incapable of saving themselves. He brings the flat of his palm down upon the baize table. "You are mature adults—*majeurs et vaccinés*," he says. "God helps those who help themselves. Your enemy is not each other but fear and cowardice. You must have the courage to accept compromises. That is what a political class is for. You must assume your responsibilities. If you don't, nobody will save you." He then sweeps up his papers and strides out.

Later that night, in the Hôtel Source du Nil, I ask him if he always chooses such caustic language in private.

"When I have to, yes." There is nothing personal about it. The anger is a professionally modulated set piece, designed to bring a craven, local élite to its senses.



Will it work?

We are only the doctors, he says. If the patient won't take the medicine, what can we do?

The metaphor is not quite accurate. These patients aren't refusing the medicine. They are setting fire to the clinic. Is there a point at which they should be left to it—a point at which even a Secretary-General succumbs to the seductiveness of moral disgust?

Everywhere he goes, he appears to be the prisoner of the expectations that these beggarly places have of the United Nations and of that exalted fiction the international community. These expectations validate his organization: they are its real mandate, its raison d'être. And yet, in one way or another, he deliberately tries to reduce these expectations, to contain the inevitable disappointment and force people to rediscover their own capabilities.

I ask him if he is tired.

"Not at all. You see me as I am."

Will he run again?

"I have fifteen months to decide."

He recently said that the achievement of the United Nations' fifty years was to create a workable international system. I tell him that after five days on the road I don't see a workable international system; I see a jungle, kept at bay by desperate improvisation.

He shakes his head. It is not that bad. There is more reason to be hopeful. He is not discouraged. "We bring hope to the international community." And then he is gone, upstairs, meeting another militia leader with blood on his hands, taking another phone call from Akashi in Zagreb or the Secretariat in New York.

Night settles on the Hôtel Source du Nil. The swimming pool is still. In the corridors, where his staff has been scurrying to and fro, there is silence, but it is soon broken by a round of gunfire and the sharp, concussive report of a grenade. Ethnic cleansing is under way half a mile from where the Secretary-General is sleeping. Before I turn out the lights, I switch on CNN. There are unconfirmed reports from Zepa that Bosnian Serb soldiers have lured civilians out of hiding in the woods at the edge of town, lined them up, and shot them all. They say the Serbs were wearing blue helmets. ◆

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THE SPORTING SCENE

THE GAMES MEN PLAY

As the U.S. Open approaches, this summer's majors have demonstrated that there is more than one way to play tennis—but which way matters most?

BY MARTIN AMIS

IN June, at Roland Garros, the Austrian clay-court "specialist" Thomas Muster duly clambered and yodelled his way to victory at the French Open. Next, instead of beginning his preparation for Wimbledon, and then playing at Wimbledon, and trying to win that one, too, to make some history, Muster went home. He took the trouble to point out that he wouldn't be watching Wimbledon on television. His set was broken, he said, and he wasn't inclined to get it fixed. Maybe Muster went further. Maybe he disconnected his radio and outlawed all newspapers. Maybe he built himself a little sense-deprivation unit (made of clay) where, during the Wimbledon fortnight, he could find repose.

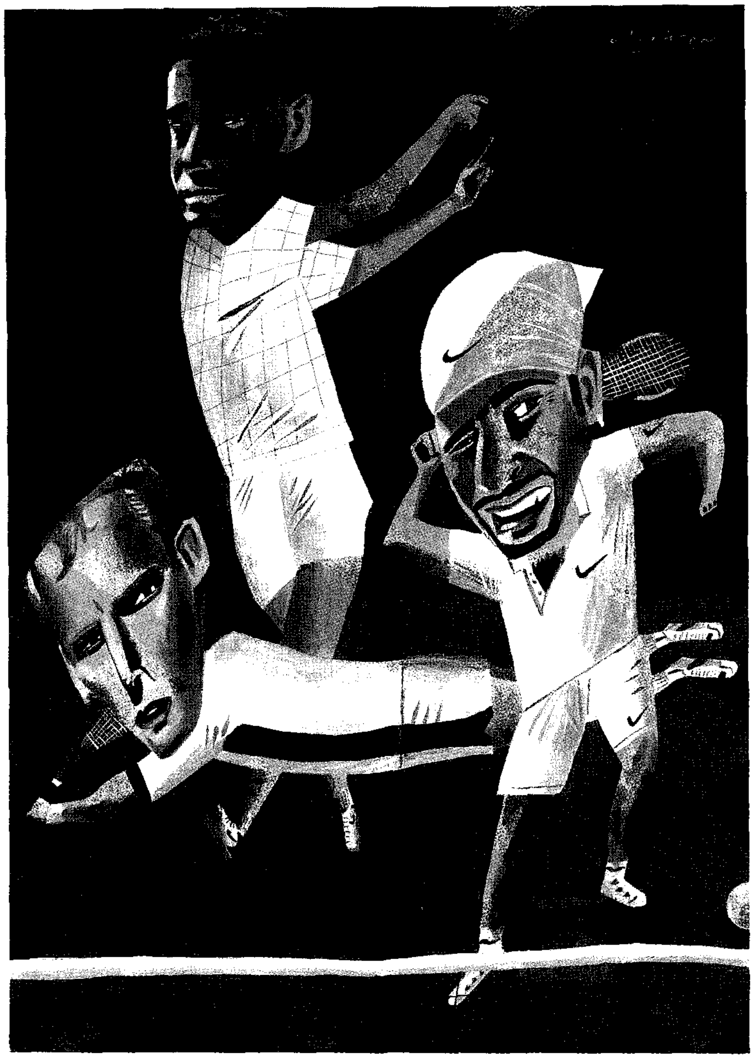
Over here in London, the strawberries and cream turned to ashes in our mouths. Muster's implication was plain. Wimbledon is played on grass, and Muster isn't interested in grass. He is interested in DecoTurf (the U.S. Open), he is interested in Rebound Ace (the Australian Open), and he is, of course, consumingly interested in clay (the French). But grass—Wimbledon—this clay-courter holds in disdain. We might respond that Wimbledon doesn't like Muster much, either: in four visits, he has never won a match here. Still, it is the more general disaffection that one must deal with. Every year, it is widely suggested that Wimbledon, historically the prince of the four Grand Slam events, is becoming a dinosaur. We're told that it would now be wise to excavate those hallowed lawns and install a more modern, more evenhanded, and less boring surface. Why, the stars of Roland Garros, who journey every year to America and Australia, won't even cross the Channel for Wimbledon. Roland Garros is for the purists, the artists, the philosophers of the sport. Wimbledon is for the eccentrics. Such an antithesis might have felt pretty accurate ten years ago, or even five. But things have changed, and it seems increasingly clear that they are now the other way around.

May-June, June-July: In the space of seven weeks, players are tested on the slowest surface and then on the fastest, in near-adjoining majors. Roland Garros and Wimbledon form the crux, the very groin, of the tennis year. This is truer than ever before. Until 1974 and 1987, respectively, the U.S. and the Australian were played on grass; now they are played on intermediate surfaces, and the peculiar challenges that these tournaments represent aren't technical so much as atmospheric: in Melbourne, the heat; in New York, the crowd. There are clay specialists, but there are no heat specialists; and there are no crowd specialists (now that Jimmy Connors has more or less hung up his shorts). And there are no *grass* specialists—not anymore—because the grass season is too compacted to support them. The lone specialism nowadays is clay.

The last man to win all four majors in his career was Roy Emerson, in the early sixties. Going into Roland Garros this spring, four players—Agassi, Becker, Sampras, and Edberg—had a chance to complete the full set: all they needed was the French. Stepping onto the grass a month later, only one player was in the same position vis-à-vis Wimbledon: the semi-retired Mats Wilander. Since 1989, the French Open has been won by Chang, Gomez, Courier (twice), Bruguera (twice), and Muster; if we exclude the French, these players have two majors among them. Since 1989, Wimbledon has been won by Becker, Edberg, Stich, Agassi, and Sampras (three times); if we exclude Wimbledon, these players have *eleven* majors among them. It's clear enough, is it not? Wimbledon is mainstream. Roland Garros—clay—is becoming a fiefdom. Consider the strange case of Alberto Berasategui. Last year, his brilliant results on clay catapulted him into the top eight; as a reward, he found himself floundering around in the élite IBM/ATP Tour World Championship (played on carpet), where he won eight games in three matches. Berasategui, if you remember, has a gimmick: he's the guy who hits forehands and backhands with the *same face* of his tennis racquet. At the tennis clubs last summer, everyone was out there trying to do what Berasategui does. The grip you need is so western it's almost eastern; the backhand it produces is just about imaginable, but the forehand is a fiasco. There we were on the baseline, all July, hitting forehands into our shoes. With this shot Berasategui reached the final at Roland Garros. Such are the mysteries of clay.

But let's be big about it, and let us now praise Thomas Munster. I mean Thomas Muster. For he is indeed a prodigious personage. Six years ago, in a Florida parking lot—it was the day of his semifinal win over Yannick Noah at the Lipton—Muster was hit by a drunk driver and horribly injured. He then put himself through the kind of rehabilitation program you see in movies "inspired" by true stories. Even before his accident—before he became an icon of Iron Will—there was something thoroughly terrifying about Muster's game. Watching a typical Muster rally (serve, stay back, pummel, pummel, retrieve, pummel, retrieve, retrieve, pummel, pummel, retrieve, retrieve, retrieve, pummel, pummel, pummel), and noticing his "commitment," one woman commentator burst out laughing and said simply, "The man's an animal." Well, at Roland Garros this year they ran out of animals to compare him to. Muster plays like Chang (his opponent in the final: Bruce Lee meets Dolph Lundgren), but with much greater weight of shot. He reminds you of Courier—Courier in 1992, when he bestrode the clay courts of Europe, and retained his French title with the condescension of a returning lord. Like Muster, Courier is a Will player; and Will can fail. (Having Will is *exhausting.*) When Courier started out, nobody fancied him as a top-ten player, let alone a No. 1. He astounded all those Floridian gurus. And he astounded himself. Now he is condemned to languish in the teens while he recovers from the shock.

Muster is always fun to watch, and to listen to. He plays like a rogue elephant, but he sounds like Tarzan taking a succession of brief rides from branch to branch. There is something very human—very honest, very undesigning—about his ululations. Sitting slumped in front of the TV with an ashtray on my lap, watching Muster and weighing up my chances against him, I sometimes feel that his Tarzanic yodels would help my cause. (Muster, of course, would never be able to breathe with me on my native grass, but he would clearly present something of an obstacle on clay.) Those neighs and whinnies of his tell you exactly how much trouble he's in, how much effort he's having to make as he leaps for that whorfing overhead, as he stretches for that squawking underspun forehand. Yet none of the other guys seem to take much encouragement from Muster's arduous commentary. This "fitness fanatic" is well known for his freak regimes and crank diets; out on the court, perhaps, his snorts sound Prussian-triumphal and bodily-hygienic—a trumpeted hymn to laxatives, muesli, and nudism. In his post-match press conferences, he is brisk and diffident. You feel that he yearns to be doing something else, like standing on his head or eating a car tire. His manner seems to say: I am an athlete who happened to choose tennis; it could have been the discus, or the 50-km. walk. In one's reveries about Muster, it is rather too easy to imagine him out there, waddling and scissoring—sweeping all before him in the 50-km. walk.



Different strokes: Thomas Muster, Pete Sampras, and Andre Agassi.

MARK ULRIKSEN

WIMBLEDON has been paranoid about being boring for some time now, and this year it spooked itself into taking action. The worry had to do with the brevity of the points: at Wimbledon, when the men are playing, the ball is "live" for less than five minutes per hour (as opposed to about fifteen minutes at the French). And the solution seemed obvious: reduce the dominance and dispatch of the serve. But how to go about it? Abolish the second serve (which would mean, in effect, abolishing the first serve)? Oblige the server to keep his feet on the ground? Shift the service line nearer to the net? Such changes were probably rejected because they seemed too structural—too shamefaced, too self-ghettoizing. In the end, Wimbledon opted for some invisible mending: it cautiously deflated the tennis balls. And that didn't make any difference. By the end of the fortnight, Sampras's serves were rico-

HAY

This much I know. Just as I'm about to make that right turn
off Province Line Road
I meet another beat-up Volvo
carrying a load

of hay. (More accurately, a bale of lucerne
on the roof rack,
a bale of lucerne or fescue or alfalfa.)
My hands are raw. I'm itching to cut the twine, to unpack

that hay accordion, that hay concertina.
It must be ten o'clock. There's still enough light
(not least from the glow

of the bales themselves) for a body to ascertain
that when one bursts, as now, something takes flight
from those hot and heavy box pleats. This much, at least, I know.

—PAUL MULDOON

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cheting unreturnably off the chalk. And Ivanisevic, apparently indifferent to his opponent's presence (indeed, as if waiting for his opponent to show up), could still finish a service game in fifty seconds.

But it was a great Wimbledon anyway, because the grass game had *already* been transformed: by Andre Agassi. In the final of the U.S. Open in 1991, on medium-fast cement, Edberg beat Courier 6–2, 6–4, 6–0, or "two, four, and oh," as the players say. That "oh" was significant: it demonstrated that even the Courier of 1991 was capable of despair. Watching Edberg going about his work in the last set (unforgettably graceful, arching, tensing, swooping), one could only conclude as follows: The baseliner is helpless against the volleyer when the volleyer *is on*. Elementary geometry decides it. The array of short angles widens in proportion to your proximity to the net. In the final of the same event three years later, Agassi beat Stich 6–1, 7–6, 7–5. Watching Agassi that day (he was unseeded—he seemed to come from nowhere), one could only conclude as follows: The volleyer is helpless against the baseliner when the baseliner is Andre Agassi. Elementary physics decides it. Once hit, a tennis ball is slowing down all the time, as friction and gravity conspire against it. But the distance between baseline and net just isn't great enough to retard an Agassi drive. Friction and gravity—and the would-be volleyer—don't get the leisure to impose themselves. Stich is custom-built for the forecourt—tall, supple, powerful, and equipped with the most delicate drop volley since McEnroe's—but after twenty minutes against Agassi he didn't want to be in the forecourt. He kept coming—gaunt, lugubrious, sick with insincerity. Not until quite late in the third set did Agassi smack a ball into Stich's body, and Stich let out a wail of long-suppressed self-pity. By this stage, you could imagine him lying basted in sweat on the service line, like a svelte piglet ready for the spit, with a decorative tennis ball jammed into his mouth. As recently as February of 1994, Agassi's ranking stood at No. 32. Now he is No. 1 in the world. What happened to him?

Much has been attributed to the coaching and mentorship of Brad Gilbert, who joined the strength at the beginning of Agassi's big surge. Hitherto, Gilbert has hardly been known as a synonym for the inspirational. Worn down by Gilbert's meagre repertoire of jabs and pokes (in the 1986 Masters), John McEnroe was plunged into a career-stalling depression. You give your future some serious thought, McEnroe mused, when you "start losing to the Brad Gilberts of this world." In its casual way (McEnroe intended no malice toward Gilbert, whom he clearly regarded, in tennis terms, as subhuman), this was a formidably comprehensive insult. It remains true, though, that Gilbert is one of the most lumbering players who have ever toiled their way into the top ten. Sometimes, disgusted by his own shot selection, he would stand with his hands on his hips and holler the words "Percentage tennis!" Gilbert co-wrote a memoir/how-to book frankly entitled "Winning Ugly." Naturally, I bought a copy, hoping that it would provide the final piece in the jigsaw of my game. I can do the Ugly bit; what I wanted was the Winning. In his book, Gilbert counsels you, for example, to give your opponent the serve when you win the toss. This is meant to rattle him, and take the pressure off you, because you won't expect to win the first game. I tried it for a while. I found I was so busy gurgling with cunning that I barely noticed losing the first eight points. It seems unlikely, on the whole, that Andre Agassi got much out of "Winning Ugly." But Gilbert has unquestionably turned him around. Not greatly gifted himself, he has taught Agassi a respect for raw talent.

Because Agassi is something new in tennis. Agassi is something else in tennis. It often seems that he isn't hitting forehands and backhands, as other men do: he is hitting half-volley drives, with unimprovable timing and uninhibited force. On the baseline, the half-volley is usually a startled reaction to a ball you don't have time to go back for. But Agassi *wants* the half-volley, and is always going forward in search of it. To do this with the true bounce of American hard courts is at least feasible. To do it with the low, ragged, and sappy bounce of grass is obviously impossible. But it is what Agassi does. And if his eyes are phenomenal specimens, then so are his feet. Like several other great athletes (Sir Garry Sobers, Eusebio), Agassi looks pigeon-toed to the point of mild deformity. His footwork is minimal, derisory, and it can afford to be, because his anticipation is off the human scale. Sometimes, most eerily, he doesn't move *at all*. This might happen when he is in the forecourt, awaiting a feeble lob. Not a muscle stirs. No step back for the step forward. No squeaky-soled fine-tuning. He knows at once that he is already where he needs to be. At such moments, Agassi's zone is the twilight zone, there in the bright afternoon.

Single-handedly, Agassi brought back to Wimbledon a spectacle that disappeared fifteen years ago, along with wooden racquets and bushy sideburns. When he won here in 1992, he had a weapon that he will never have again: the capacity to astonish. His opponents (and advertisement

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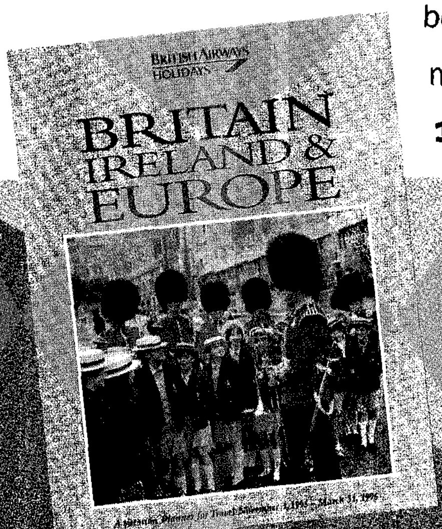

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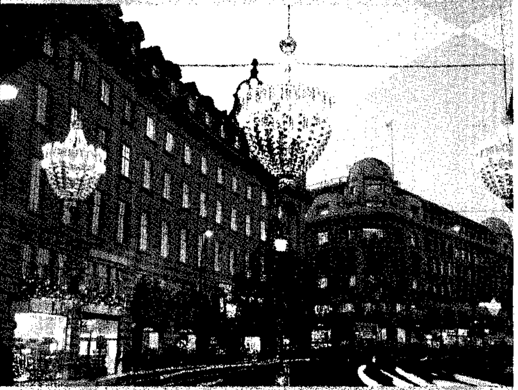

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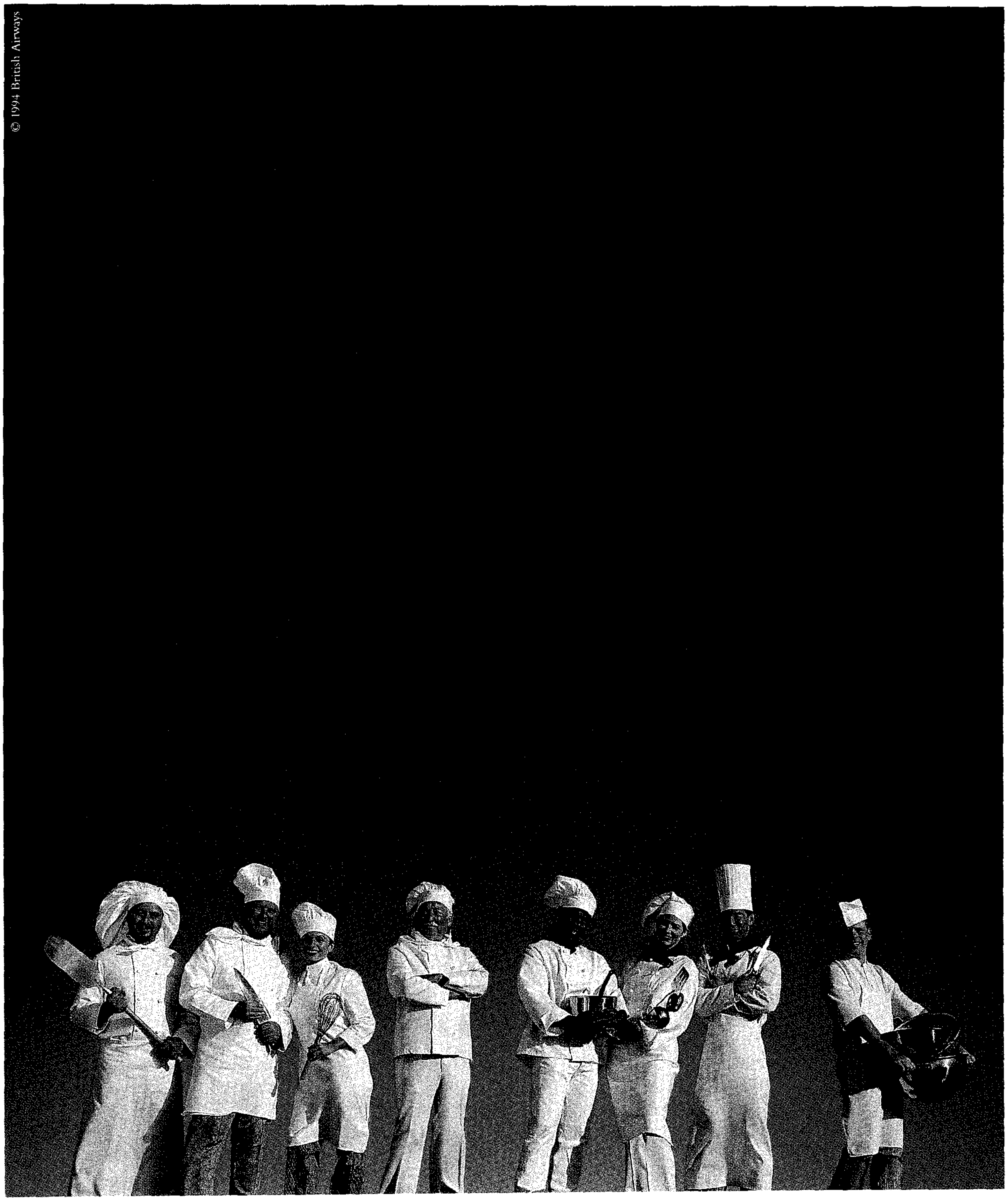

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they included Becker, McEnroe, and Ivanisevic) kept coming forward. Understandably, they were thinking, This is grass, for Christ's sake; you win on grass by coming forward. But Agassi was returning harder than they were serving; his radar knew which way their balance and inclination were tending, and he could wrong-foot them even as they ran toward him; and if they made it to the net he could pass, or lob, with a disguise that had them jumping out of their shoes. They know that now. And they know that running from side to side, as opposed to charging ever netward, is definitely an option. So they, too, stay back, and rally.

This year, the baseline exchange on grass was revealed in its forgotten and neglected beauty, like an oil painting exposed beneath flaking acrylic. The white-clad players loom over the severe green rectangle, which seems to shrink to the size of a paddleball court. On clay, sometimes, the two duellists are scampering around among the line judges on the back wall, hoisting topspin lobs into the blue yonder. On grass, the players are more intensely configured, and they rely not on tactics but on instinct. If clay tennis is chess, then lawn tennis is speed chess. If clay tennis is bridge, then lawn tennis is Racing Demon. Chang vs. Korda, Agassi vs. Wheaton, Becker vs. Pioline, Agassi vs. Becker: for long periods, these encounters felt so pure and abstract that the players' identities seemed to evaporate. Ego evaporated. Failing to control a dipping Agassi passing shot, Wheaton cried out, "Ah, get *down.*" He wasn't scolding himself for laziness or poor technique. He was acknowledging that he had failed to read the geometry and physics of that particular volley.

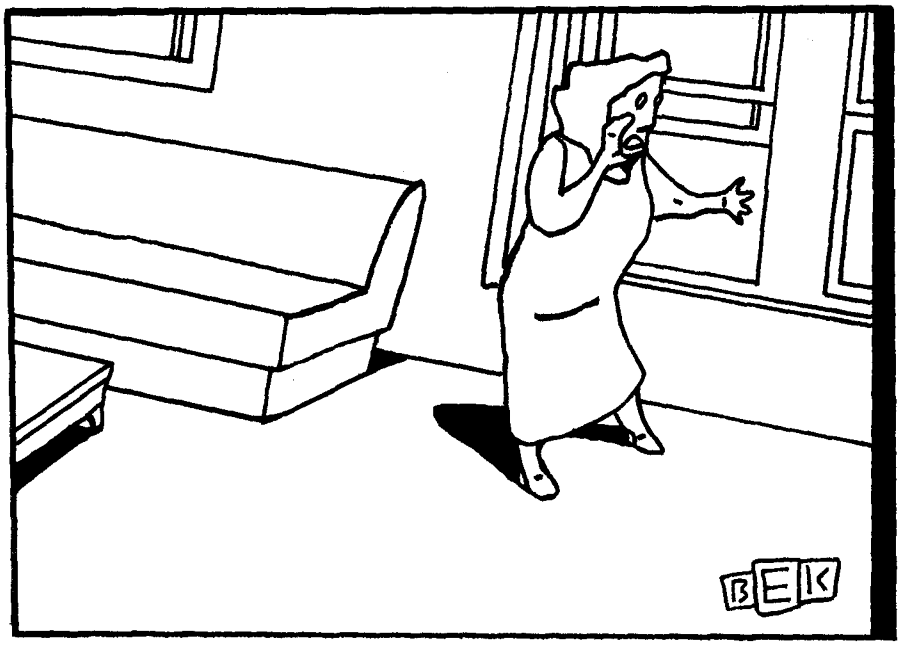
IN both the iconic and the colloquial sense, Agassi is *great.* Wimbledon owes him a statue. But let us be clear about what he is and what he isn't. He is postmodern and sui generis; he is articulate and sportsmanlike; he is an unprecedentedly vicious striker of the tennis ball. What he isn't is crystallized, fast-court perfection. That's what Pete Sampras is.

Sampras made history this year with his third successive win, joining Björn Borg (and Fred Perry, or whoever. As if it mattered. History has its place, but can't we agree to forget everything that ever happened in tennis before, say, 1950 at the earliest? Surely it is idle to compare a player like Thomas Muster to some forty-year-old chain-smoker with long trousers and a racquet press). Perhaps because of his on-court efficiency, his freedom from blind spots and frailties, Sampras is still widely felt to be lacking something in the "personality" department. He could fix this, and quickly, if he wanted to. Acquiring personality, after all, is the work of a moment: what you have to do is act like a jerk. Besides, it seemed to me this year that Sampras stood out among his peers as a veritable live wire. Everyone else was doing a new variation on melodramatic single-mindedness (a technique probably called something like Deep Focus II, and much discussed, one imagines, in the hotel gyms and the courtesy cars). You don't go boss-eyed and unblinking, as you did a year or two back. What you do now is look mature and supercilious, unmoved by mere vicissitudes, as if in obedience to the Kipling couplet that adorns the players' entrance to the Centre Court:

> If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
> And treat those two impostors just the same.

Since when does the modern tennis player treat *triumph* as an impostor? The no-sweat, nothing-special, duck's-back, day's-work detachment the players seek is, of course, precarious, and can collapse with comical speed. Ivanisevic, during his excruciatingly tense second-set tiebreaker against Kafelnikov, was sauntering around between points like a seventeen-year-old ignoring his girlfriend at a picnic. Then he missed a backhand volley and turned his racquet into a coat hanger before the ball had bounced twice. ("Code violation, Mr. Ivanisevic.") You're not supposed to seem pleased when you hit a good one, either; you just look even haughtier. There must be a happy—or less miserable—medium, and Sampras appears to have found it. He smiles, he scowls, he whoops when his side-spun down-the-liner comes off. Sampras takes a while to settle into his mastery; once he gets ahead, the opponent fades away, and Sampras is left to compete against himself.

Becker tried to do Deep Focus II, but this is something he can manage only while he's winning smoothly in the early rounds. He looked authentically and almost reassuringly bananas after outrallying Agassi. And in the final he looked like van Gogh in his last few moments with a full set of ears. Yes, Becker was grim even as he took the tiebreaker in the first set. I think he already knew that he wouldn't be breaking Sampras's serve that day. His one hope, therefore, was to do what Stich did to Edberg in the semifinal of 1991, when the score was 4–6, 7–6, 7–6, 7–6. And what were the chances of that, once Sampras started hitting his returns at Becker's shoelaces? The match had only one dynamic, that of inevitability. And the umpire kept telling you why. "Time," he kept saying. "Time." This has been Becker's era at Wimbledon: three titles and nine semifinals in eleven years. But the new era has already begun. Becker was equal to the mood, finding a gentle high style to mark his own passing. Sampras, he said, "owns the Centre Court. I used to own it, but it belongs to him now." ◆



"Wait! Come back! I was just kidding about wanting to be happy."

LETTER FROM GERMANY

THE POLITICS OF MEMORY

The new trend in Germany's struggle to "manage" its past is to see itself as Nazism's victim. This has many Germans worrying about the implications of building Berlin's Holocaust memorial.

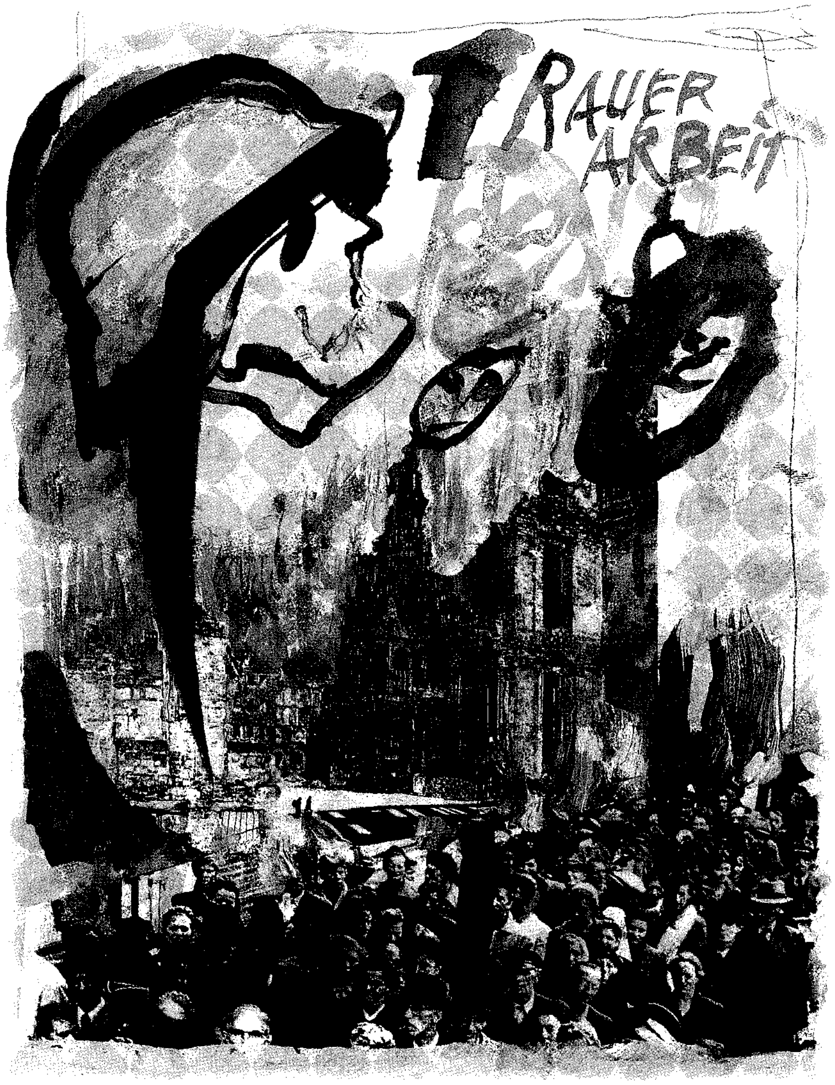
BY JANE KRAMER

IT could be said that in the fifty years since the German field marshal Wilhelm Keitel laid down his staff and his hat on a Berlin table, and the war in Europe ended, Germans have been trying to talk their way out of an unutterable past and back into what they like to call History. They have been talking mainly to one another. History is a German obsession and a German métier. There are people who claim that, with Hegel and the great nineteenth-century historiographers, Germans actually invented history, and it is certainly true that the country now produces historians the way Italy produces lawyers, or Argentina psychoanalysts—in aggressive, even defiant, disproportion. By history, Germans mean German history. They call it a *Wissenschaft*, a science, but it is arguably more alchemy than science, since it has always had to do with turning the myths, memories, and language of "Germanness" into a kind of collective destiny known as the German nation. It may be history's revenge that today, fifty years after the surrender, Germans are still arguing about what to do with the destiny that they invented.

For practical, political purposes—purposes of state—the negotiation of a new German past began six years ago, when the Wall came down, though some Germans have put it much later, somewhere around the time "Schindler's List" opened in Berlin and the prospect of what could be called "the past of the good Germans" was suddenly so evident and so exhilarating. Some say that it was Helmut Kohl's project all along—this new and revised Germany, settled into its history, comfortable, even, in its history. Call it—this is the past of choice—Victim Germany. It is the Germany that Hitler "seized" in 1933 and "occupied" for twelve dark years; the Germany that was "liberated" in 1945, as if it were Holland, or a concentration camp. And it may have been the inevitable Germany, because once the Wall fell, in November of 1989, this Germany turned out to be the only version of themselves that East Germans and West Germans could be brought to hold in common. The two Germanys do not much like each other now that they are one Germany, or agree on anything beyond a taste in cars, but they share this: they are determined to settle their crimes into "history." They want to resolve a duty to remember and a longing to forget, as if duty and desire were the thesis and antithesis of a dialectic of destiny. They have a stubborn, almost innocent German faith that their past is like their prime rate or their G.N.P.—something that with a good plan and a lot of attention can be adjusted, refreshed, pressed into the service of the new German nation. After fifty years, they have lost patience with the painful plain truths of recapitulation. They prefer the symbolic simplicities of objectification—the monuments, memorials, and "commemorative sites" that take memory and deposit it, so to speak, in the landscape, where it can be visited at appropriate ceremonial moments, but where it does not interfere unduly with the business of life at hand.

The etiquette of commemoration is thorny, at best, in Germany, and this year it has been especially thorny—something the Germans might have learned from their Polish neighbors, who staged the first of Europe's fiftieth-anniversary ceremonies on January 26th, the day of the liberation of Auschwitz, and bungled the occasion thoroughly when Lech Walesa delivered a long speech in Kraków without once mentioning Jews. The first big anniversary commemoration here took place in Dresden, on February 13th, after a day in which thousands of people marched through the city to the ruins of the Frauenkirche, carrying candles, in memory of the Dresden bombings—bombings that the marchers remembered as a savagery visited on the city for reasons most of them were hard put to it to explain. It fell to Roman Herzog, the German President, to remind them of London and Coventry, and of the fact that the Second World War was not a war that the people who bombed Dresden started. Dresdeners, anyway, do not necessarily think they were liberated in 1945. Most of them think they were liberated in 1989, when the Wall came down, and the few who do talk about May 8, 1945, as "Liberation Day" share a convenient confusion over whether they were liberated by the Allies or *from* the Allies. No matter. Liberation today is less a no-win than a no-lose concept, and it is certainly not the concept that Richard von Weizsäcker had in mind when *he* was President of the Federal Republic and introduced it in a speech on the fortieth anniversary of the Nazi defeat. When von Weizsäcker talked in 1985 about "the liberation of Germany," he wanted Germans to understand that 1945 was not the end of Germany—which is what a lot of their parents had told them—but the only possible beginning for Germany. It was an understanding he shared with many German intellectuals (Jürgen Habermas and Hans-Magnus Enzensberger among them), but it has very little to do with the political understanding of "liberation," then and now. The politics of liberation have always been Helmut Kohl's department, and Kohl, through thirteen years as Chancellor, has been determined to leave Germans with not only a united country but a heroic one. ("He wants to put Germany on the winning side; it's as simple as that," a young historian here put it.) You could say that in this he has been the first really successful revisionist of postwar German history.

Kohl's genius was to understand that Germans were not interested in hearing any more explanations—even friendly, exonerating explanations—of their choices. Germans had had enough of the old historians of the German right, who liked to hypothesize about how National Socialism was a response to Bolshevism, or to Weimar inflation, or the Wall Street crash, or the Treaty of Versailles. Kohl was the new German right. He understood that Germans, like everybody else, want to be exonerated from their choices. You could say they want to be "liberated" from their choices, and if this is true it is understandable that by now they want that liberation to be comfortable—something on the order of the baggy pants in the Levi-Strauss Dockers ad that went up on billboards all over Germany this liberation year. "Try them on," the ad said. "They may even liberate your soul." Germans want their past to have happened to them. They want to have suffered from themselves, the way everybody else suffered from them.



Germans want their past to have happened to them. They want to have suffered from themselves, the way everybody else suffered from them.

WOLFGANG PETRIC/PHOTOS: CULVER PICTURES

TWO years before the Wall fell, a local television-talk-show hostess by the name of Lea Rosh announced that Berlin was going to have a memorial to the six million Jews who died in Europe during the Second World War. She collected a list of famous names—among them Willy Brandt, Günter Grass, and Christa Wolf—and launched a celebrity version of what Germans call a "citizens' initiative." In a few years' time, she had a twelve-million-dollar budget for her memorial. She had a promise from Kohl of a hundred and forty million dollars' worth of Berlin real estate on which to build it—five acres of what was once a no man's land near the Brandenburg Gate, between the Pariser Platz and the Leipziger Platz, and is now the middle of town. (The land was said to be over the ruins of Hitler's bunker, but after it was announced that "in the place of the perpetrator, the victims shall be remembered" it turned out, to everyone's embarrassment, to be over Hitler's driver's bunker.) Bonn was involved. The Berlin Senat was involved. Despite (or maybe because of) Lea Rosh's own celebrity, and her relentless promotion, there was so much controversy surrounding her Holocaust-memorial project that the project itself turned into a ghoulish public entertainment. By liberation year, five hundred and twenty-eight artists and architects were competing for the chance to build the memorial—"the soul of Germany," Hanns Zischler, the Berlin actor and writer, said, dryly, after he saw their models—and everyone in Berlin was fighting about what the definition of a Holocaust victim should be.

Rosh is a media grande dame of fifty-eight, given to jewelled bifocals, plunging black bustiers, and raspberry suits that match the gold-flecked, kidney-shaped raspberry Lucite table in her Hannover office, where she receives visitors and discusses the Holocaust while sipping white wine, answering mail, and autographing pictures of herself. She is famous in Germany for self-invention, and avid when it comes to her image and her reputation. Sometimes, she says that the idea of a Holocaust memorial came to her when she and a Stuttgart historian named Eberhard Jäckel were working together on a documentary about collaboration. Sometimes, she says it came to her when she was visiting the memorial at Yad Vashem, in Israel. But she is quite clear that the idea was *hers*. People who have followed her career from talk-show hostess to a director of North German Television say that, whatever inspiration she claims now, once she had the idea the project was inevitable.

Rosh is in what her critics call—always in English—"the Shoah business" (as in, regrettably, "There's no business like Shoah business"), although it has to be said that a lot of those critics are in the business themselves, part of a thriving new German industry in books and essays and public art and commemorations devoted to the Holocaust. Germans right now are absorbed in an elaborate exercise in "solidarity," if not identification, with Hitler's victims. (The writer Eike Geisel calls this "Jewish envy.") There are hardly any Jews in Germany, but there are an astonishing number of Germans who proclaim their solidarity with Jews by speaking in synagogues and inviting their friends to Seders, and even giving their children Hebrew names—showing the Poles, someone here told me, that in a country without Jews it is just as easy to love Jews as it is to hate them. Lea Rosh, as it happens, gave *herself* the Jewish name. She went to the Berlin Registry, renounced "Edith," and legally became "Lea." She likes to tell people that her best friend is a Jew called Rachel, and that her husband is Jakob. She seems to "feel" Jewish. She feels Jewish not so much because she is partly Jewish herself—her mother's father was a Berlin Jew—as because she has taken up identification with Jewishness as a German duty. Some Germans simply assume she is Jewish—because of her name and because, in the strangled rhetoric of identity that philo-Semites and anti-Semites share, she "looks" Jewish. She is brassy and a little crude. And she is unnervingly enthusiastic on the subject of Jewish suffering—an enthusiasm that has touched some Jews I know in Berlin and horrified others, many of whom remember the day she interviewed a camp survivor named Cordelia Edvardson on her talk show, and asked, in a cheery, no-nonsense television voice, "Miss Edvardson, how did *you* get to Auschwitz?" Miss Edvardson looked up coolly and said, "By train, Miss Rosh."

I met Rosh late last winter, on the day she finished editing a short film about the liberation of Bergen-Belsen. The film was put together from a famous segment of British Imperial War Museum footage known to movie buffs as the Hitchcock reel, because Alfred Hitchcock helped with the editing. But Rosh didn't mention Hitchcock. She was not much interested in anybody else who could be said to be in the Shoah business. She wanted me to know that because of her the city of Hannover had a Holocaust memorial, near the opera-house square, on which the names of all the Hannover deportees were engraved in stone, and I had already heard rumors in Berlin that she and her husband, Jakob—Jakob Schulze-Rohr is a city planner—were going to build another memorial, a small memorial of their own, and donate it to the Grunewald station, where the trains for the camps once waited. She had had problems in Hannover, where some people didn't want a memorial at all and the people who did want one complained ceaselessly about her being peremptory and heavy-handed. And she was certainly having problems in Berlin. A lot of Berlin intellectuals had been opposed to her project to begin with. They wrote articles in the *Tagesspiegel* and made speeches at the Literaturhaus saying that Germany had no "right" to the memory of its victims. Other people, they said, but not Germany. They argued that the memory of the Holocaust belonged to the Jews who survived it—that it was not only a question of identity but, in a way, of property. They tried to persuade Rosh that a Holocaust memorial in Israel meant something very different from a memorial in the middle of what was once Hitler's Reich. They thought that putting a memorial like that in the shadow of the Brandenburg Gate would only add to the confusion about "perpetrators" and "victims" which has marked Kohl's project to settle the past by turning defeat into liberation and Nazi Germany into the Germany that Hitler seized.

Berlin is already full of memorials, although, it has been pointed out, very few that evoke a common or a proud history, or even a real history. The East Berliners built memorials as object lessons in the new East German past, in which "Hitler's victims" meant Hitler's *Communist* victims; and the West Berliners—despite the evidence of the ruined Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, at the top of Kurfürstendamm, and the mountain of rubble in Grunewald that is known to everyone here as the Devil's Mountain—were usually just as reluctant as the East Berliners to accept that the capital of the Third Reich was a ruin of its own making. Once the Wall went up, the memorials that West Berliners did build were put to a convenient, if ambiguous, political purpose—conflating, simply by being there, the real war and the Cold War, the perpetrator and the victim. It has to be said that if the East Germans hadn't raised a wall the West Germans might have had to raise one for them, because the walled-in West Berlin was less a city in any ordinary urban sense than a theatre of politics, a vast performance space where generations of Cold War politicians practiced the rhetoric of division and unification on which they hoped to make their reputations. West Berlin was good for you—uplifting, and even cathartic—but it was not the real world once the Wall went up and John F. Kennedy flew in and compared the West Berliners to citizens of ancient Rome, pronouncing the magic words "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" and, with them, turning the city into an owned and operated symbol of

PLUS THE FACT OF YOU

The sun, having come
down hard all day, goes out softly from
our limbs tonight, the burn we'd otherwise
be feeling tamed to a banked glow
by one of the white, magic lotions pulled
from your big black sack of supplies.

We're both up to the brim—
with rice, little shrimp, red snapper aswim
in a spiced lime-laced broth, greens in a mustard
vinaigrette, black beans with cilantro
and chilies, pineapple wedges, papaya,
coffee, some nutmeg-dusted custard.

And my head's brimming, too,
for as I'm drifting off, my back to you,
your breathing seems to flutter through a green
undergrowth and I'm standing where
this morning we stood, dumbstruck to behold
more flowers than either'd ever seen

outside a garden: one
whole hillside under blossom, overrun
as by a river, golds, whites, pinks, reds, fluid
and aflame!
(But now my sleep-tilted
task is to compute if blooms outnumber breaths,
or breaths blooms . . . And let's say you take

eight breaths a minute, that's some sixty
minutes per flower and don't forget to carry the one but which
one is it?—and why at night do numbers clamor so, packed
too tight too are they, no other room
to bloom, carry the one?—carry the sun under your skin,
we do, and if you add a one to two, too? . . .)

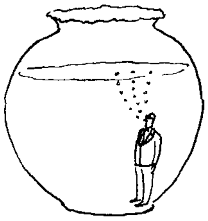
I arrive at my sum
down at the base of the slope, where I come
upon you, slyly deep in foliage,
sheltering from the sun,
dipping hot red feet in a bouldered stream,
three buttons of your blouse undone.

—BRAD LEITHAUSER

democracy. Now, suddenly, the past has replaced the Wall in the psychic archeology of the city that is once again the German capital, and nobody really knows where to put it, or how to address it, or what to do with so much memory as the people who remember die.

THE historian Reinhard Rürup told me once that in his opinion the way to reclaim the real past and confront it was, literally, to dig for it—to dig through the rhetorical ground cover of Cold War Berlin until you reached what was left of Nazi Berlin—and this, in fact, is what he did. He dug into a Kreuzberg lot where the Gestapo, the S.S., and the Nazi state-security police had had their headquarters, and turned the lot into an archive and exhibition center called the Topography of Terror. It was, he says, a "history of the perpetrators" project, by which he means that it was very different from the kind of projects Lea Rosh had in mind.

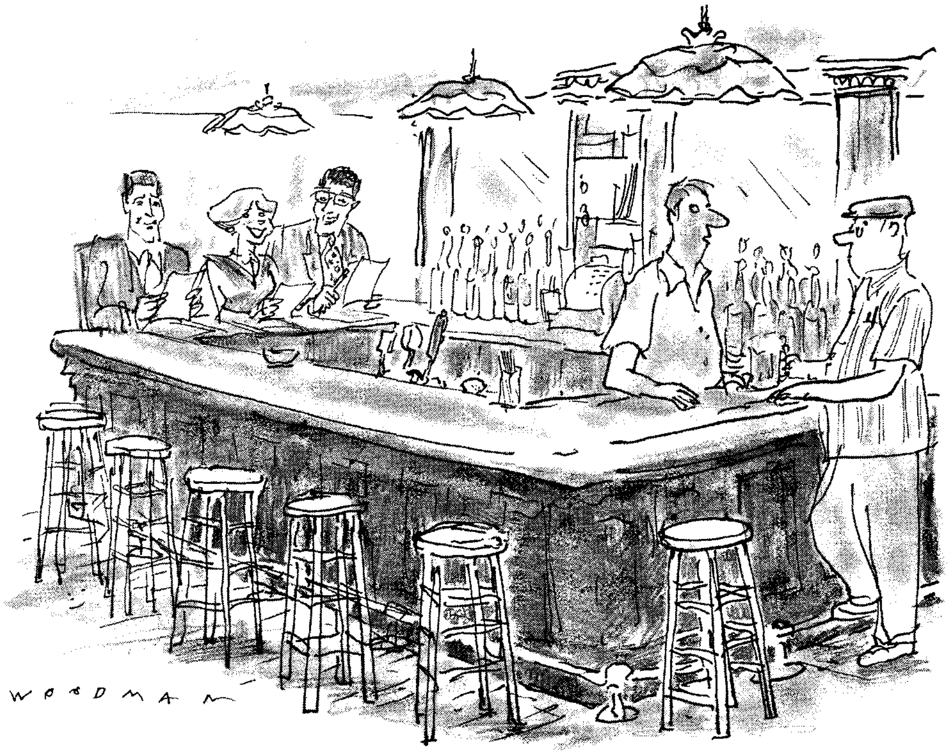
Rürup came to Berlin, from Westphalia, as a young man. He had just begun to write a book on the eighteenth-century emancipation of German Jewry, and he had what he calls a gnawing interest in "how an emancipatory eighteenth century turned into an anti-Semitic twentieth century." His view of "liberation" was that "what Germans needed was to be liberated from themselves." And he thought that the place to start was where Germany's policemen and bureaucrats and S.S. office workers had sat at their desks and done their jobs and issued the orders of the Nazi terror. He wanted Germans to know what "the everyday details of that criminal system" were—who sat next to whom, and who collected the mail, and who ate in the cafeteria. "Not memory but history" is how he describes his project. It was not an easy project. Most of the well-known German historians of the war were interested in what Rürup calls "the processes" of National Socialism, but he was more of a "dig where you stand" person. He wanted to look at "the places" of National Socialism, and the place that particularly interested him was so big that it spread across the Soviet and the American sectors and, in due course, across the Wall. No one then knew precisely where 8 Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse—the address of the headquarters—started. The street had disappeared from the city maps after the East Germans razed it and built a new street, with a proper proletarian name: Niederkirchnerstrasse, they called it, after a seamstress named Käthe Niederkirchner, who had fought in the Communist resistance and been murdered in Ravensbrück eight months before the German defeat. The nearest building on the western side of the Wall was a ruined city museum, the Martin-Gropius-Bau. But Rürup persuaded the city to start digging, and eventually cellars were discovered that turned out to have been a Gestapo washroom and kitchen. By 1987, he had covered the walls of those cellars with documents and pictures and was able to open a small temporary exhibit about the men and women who had spent their time recruiting death squads and thinking up catchy slogans for a final solution (the order requiring Jewish shopkeepers to pay for the damage of Kristallnacht was called Operation Clean Streets) and inventing new enemies (as in "persons roaming in Gypsy fashion [will] be compelled to submit to a racial-biological examination"). It was not what Germans call a memory site, or a *Kranzabwurfstelle*—a "wreath-throwing place." It was, like Rürup himself, pedagogic, formal, and a little severe. But it was on the tourist route, and it was oddly popular, and, once the Germanys united (and Kohl began to demand that Niederkirchnerstrasse and most of the other streets with "Communist" names get back their "proper" German historical names), Rürup and his history-of-the-perpetrators staff were able to start planning for a permanent archive, four times as big as the cellars they show in now.



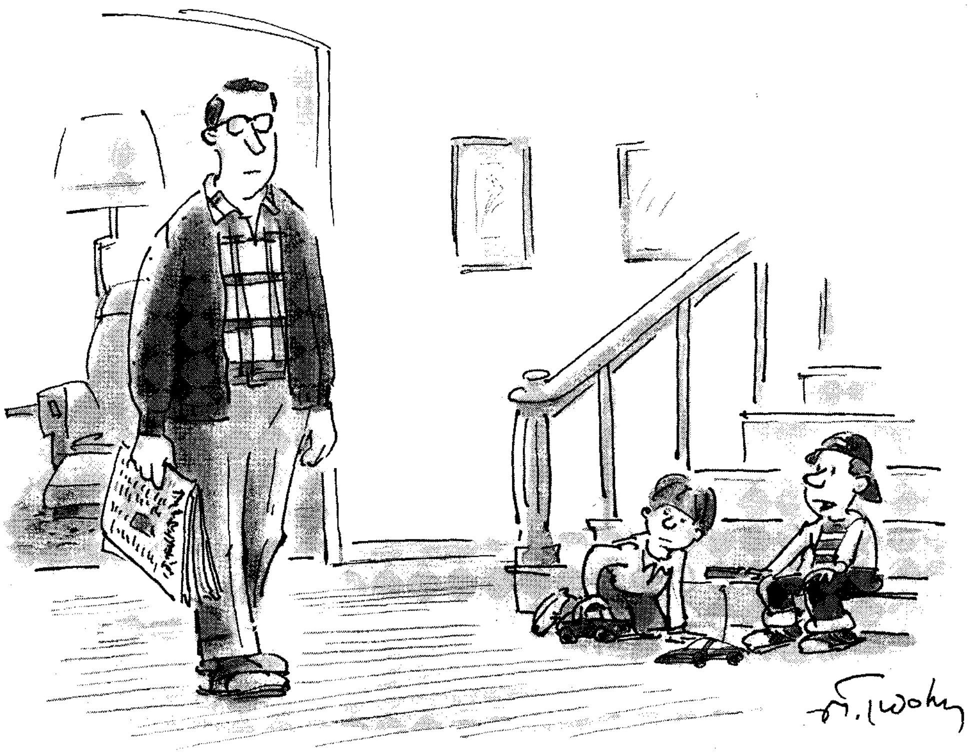
Rürup says that Lea Rosh was "my only controversy." Rosh wanted the site for her Holocaust memorial. She fought him for it. She used her celebrity. She courted German Jews who were also celebrities ("I got her letter and my feeling was, Why the hell don't we have a memorial in Berlin?" Hellmut Stern, the old assistant concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic, told me), and she courted ordinary German Jews who were not celebrities and, as Rosh put it, "didn't want to attract attention, didn't want to be noticed, [until] we made it clear that this is a *German*, not a Jewish, thing." Rürup had nothing against the idea of a Holocaust memorial in Berlin, but he thought it was "inappropriate" to use the land at 8 Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse for a memorial to one group of victims when "*all* the persecutions originated there." Rosh, on the other hand, was very clear about wanting a Jewish memorial. "Hitler's killing program was *for* Jews, it was *about* the destruction of Jews" is the way she put it. "All the other killing followed from it." She would not agree to a monument to "all victims." She thought that if you started calling everybody who died because of Hitler a Holocaust victim you would end up with "another Neue Wache," by which she meant the memorial on Unter den Linden, in the east of Berlin, which was built as a guardhouse after the Napoleonic Wars, and over the years has done duty as a First World War memorial, then as a Communist memorial to "the victims of Fascism and militarism," and, now, as Helmut Kohl's memorial to "the victims of war and tyranny." (Kohl added a big bronze cast of a Käthe Kollwitz Pietà and was roundly criticized by the left for "the imposition of Christian symbolism.") Kohl called *his* Neue Wache a monument to "reconciliation," but the result has been that some of the wreaths and flowers left at the base of the Kollwitz bronze are inscribed to the memory of S.S. officers who died in the war, and whose families consider them victims, too.

Lea Rosh told Rürup that once a Jewish memorial was built she would see to it that a memorial was built for other victims. It was not an idea that appealed to the professor, who envisioned the Gypsies, say, complaining because the Jewish memorial was bigger than *their* memorial, and the Jews replying that there were, after all, many more Jewish Holocaust victims than Gypsy victims. He saw the gay community demanding *its* memorial, because the Nazis had tried to exterminate homosexuals, too, and then the Poles demanding *their* memorial, and then the Jehovah's Witnesses, until the new Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse turned into a carpet of monuments—monuments stretching endlessly into the distance, like pyramids in the desert. He thought that memory and mourning would be "lost to the banality of conflicting claims," and lost to politics, and lost even to the Germans, who would shake their heads and say, "Look, the Jews and the Gypsies are fighting. What do you expect?" And it was not hard to imagine that happening, since the leader of the Gypsy community here had already started saying that, wherever the Germans decided to put their Holocaust Memorial, he wanted "creative and spatial proximity" for *his* memorial, and the leader of the Jewish community was saying no, there had to be twenty-five yards, at least, between them, because for Jews a Holocaust memorial was like a cemetery, and rabbis would want to pray there, and cantors would want to chant the Kaddish, and they would do this only if the memorial were "Jewish ground." In the end, Kohl settled the problem of sites by presenting Rosh with her five prime acres of central Berlin. It was a perfect place, from the point of view of prominence and status. But it did not settle the question of victims, or stop the argument.

THERE were a hundred and sixty thousand Jews in Berlin in 1933. Today, there are ten thousand, and Lea Rosh was right when she said that most of those Jews did not want to get caught in the middle of an argument about a Holocaust memorial. Some of them liked the idea of her memorial. Some of them even said that Germany "owed" them the memorial. A few of them claimed that when Kohl put "all the victims in one tomb" at the Neue Wache, and Ignatz Bubis, the head of the Jewish community in Germany, complained, Kohl had actually promised Bubis that the Jews would have one. But it may be that just by being here and being afraid of calling attention to themselves those Jews gave the lie to the official conviction that the past was "history." A designer named Inge Borck—a Berlin Jew who used to dress Rosh for her television show and is now raising money for her memorial—told me, "They don't want to be advocates for the project. They want to live privately, for their families, for their businesses. That's all they want." (It occurred to me later that she could have been talking in the nineteen-thirties.) Borck said it was much easier to approach the foreigners who could be called "honorary Berlin Jews"—people like Daniel Barenboim, who conducts the Deutsche Oper and had offered to give a benefit concert for the project—than to persuade ordinary Berlin Jewish families to sign a check, or even a petition. "It's very difficult for them to express Jewish feelings on the Jewish experience" is the way she put it. Maybe it's simply that they don't trust Germans. Berlin Jews have always been leery of the sort of people whom Henryk Broder—a Jewish journalist who lives in Berlin and earns his living as a critic in and of the Shoah business—calls "the professionals of redemption," even when those professionals are



"No, we don't have a TV, but we do have a news team."



"Wow, right out of Central Casting!"

Jewish themselves, like the blond and blue-eyed Borck, who says, without a hint of irony, that she is better at raising money from Christians "because I look like an ordinary German woman, I don't look Jewish, I am not the stereotype with the long nose."

Only about eight hundred people who could properly be called "Berlin Jews" are left now. There are nearly as many Israelis in Berlin, and certainly as many East European Jews, who are either camp survivors or the children and grandchildren of survivors—of Jews who came to Berlin as displaced persons and, out of fascination or determination or fatigue or simply hopelessness, never moved. The great majority of the ten thousand Jews who make up the official Jewish community of Berlin today are recent Russian immigrants, and it is doubtful that many of them are interested in paying for Lea Rosh's Holocaust memorial or, for that matter, have even bothered to walk into the back yard of the community center, on Fasanenstrasse, where the Jews of Berlin have built a Holocaust memorial of their own. It is a simple memorial—a small bronze wall, like a wailing wall, with the names of the death camps spread across it. Every year, on the anniversary of Kristallnacht the community faithful come to the wall to mourn.

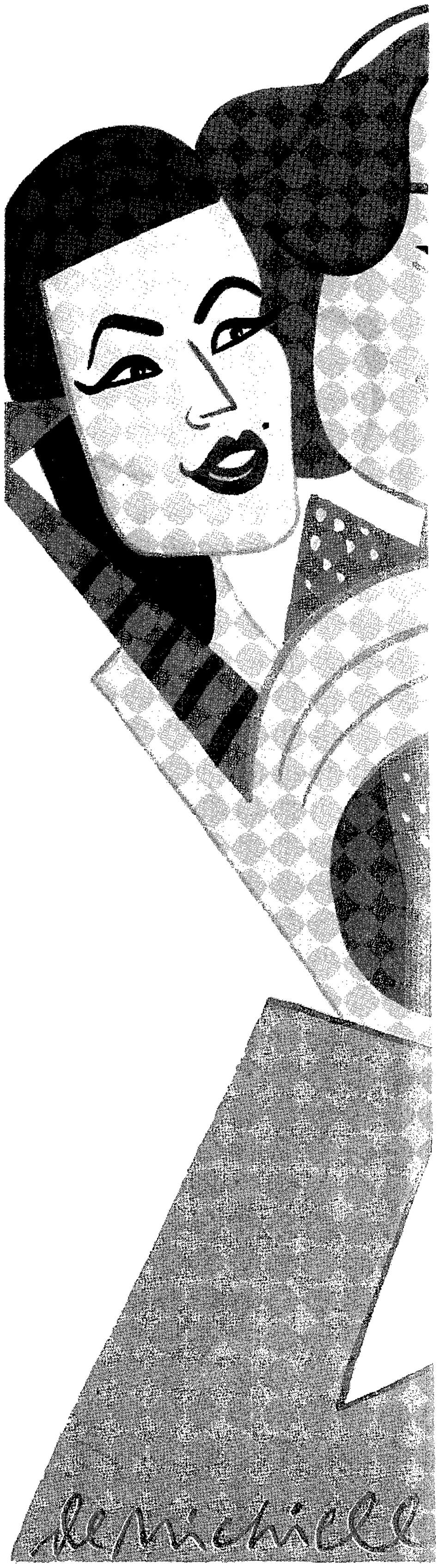
Estrongo Nachama, who is an Auschwitz survivor and the oldest cantor in Berlin, always sings the Kaddish at the center on Kristallnacht, and I remember his son, Andreas, telling me once that after forty years of hearing his father sing he had come to the conclusion that the yard behind the center was the only proper Holocaust memorial for Berlin, "because you enter it through a living Jewish community"—a community of survivors and their children. You acknowledge *them.* Today, Andreas has strong doubts about Lea Rosh's project. He went to the first public meetings on the memorial, to answer questions about Jewish customs (he is a historian himself and, as it happens, Rürup's deputy at the Topography of Terror), and the artists and architects he talked to called him afterward with Hebrew texts to translate. He was amused that at the beginning all the meetings began on Thursday and lasted through Saturday—in other words, through the Jewish Sabbath. "Amused but not surprised," he says. He suspects that a lot of Germans know more about dead Jews than they know about Jews who are living in their midst, and about what those Jews are like, and about how they celebrate and how they mourn, or even why they are here.

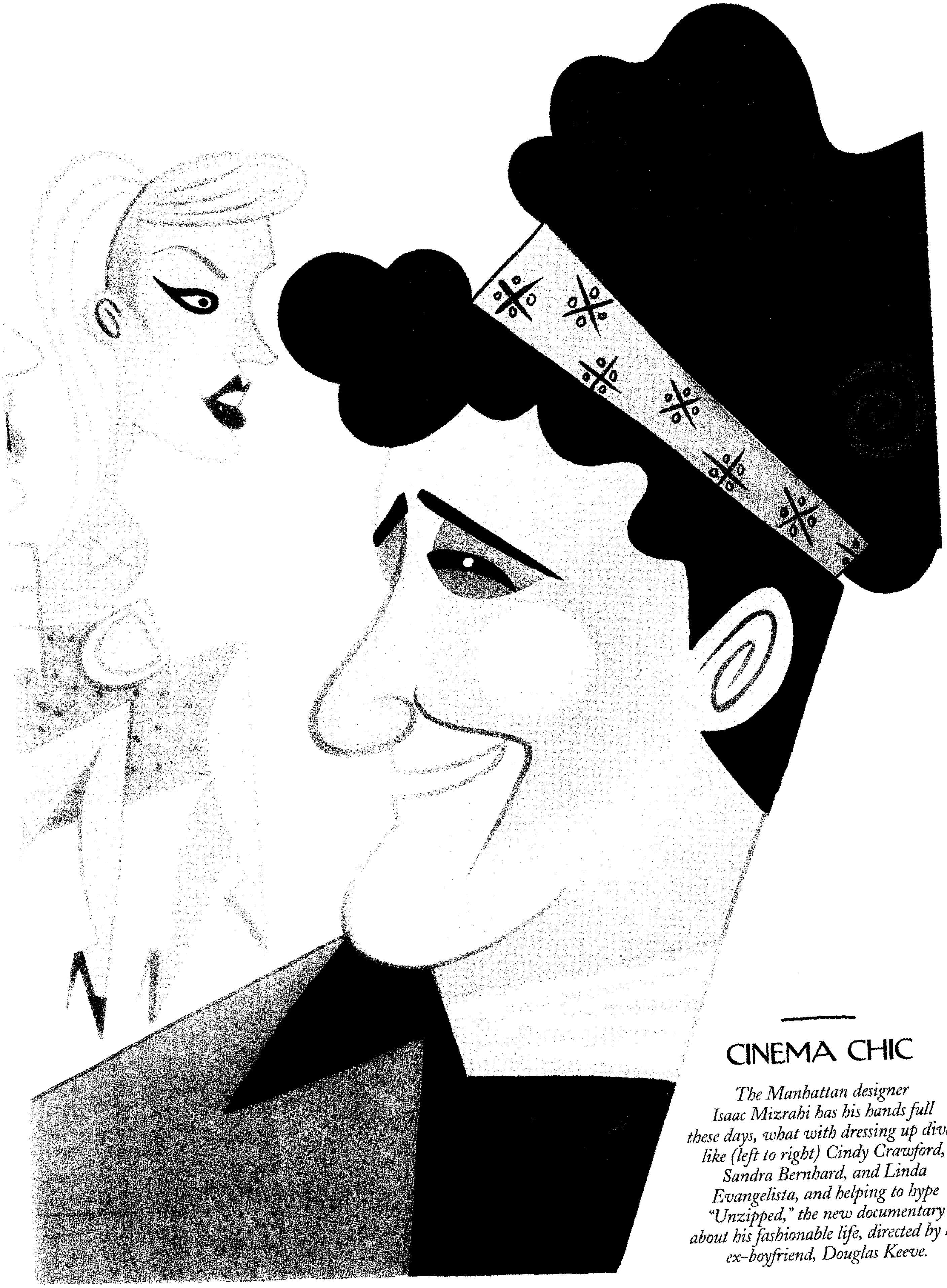
The historian Werner Angress, who got out of Berlin in 1937, at seventeen, when a Jewish family with a tax-loss tobacco farm in Virginia supplied him with a job and a farmworker's visa, and who came back to Berlin to live fifty years later, put it this way: "I'm not a victim. I didn't have Kristallnacht. I don't have roots here anymore, but I have memories, and they are not bad memories." Hellmut Stern, who left Berlin for Harbin twelve days after Kristallnacht and was saved as a "German" because the Japanese commander in Harbin didn't distinguish between "German Jews and German Germans," told me, "Coming out of the subway here, there's a certain smell, and that smell was 'home.'" Inge Marcus, who today is a seventy-three-year-old Berlin grandmother, was "invited out" of Berlin by an Englishwoman she had met at a concert in Marienbad in 1936, and she came back early, in 1951. She says, "Well, there was not much left, but the empty spaces reminded me of what had been, and the air was familiar, and I thought, Yes, I could live here." Younger Jews, of course, have no Berlin to remember. Nicola Galliner, who is forty-four and runs the Jewish community's adult-education program, grew up in London and came to Berlin in the late sixties, and she thinks that Jews her age are drawn to Berlin because "the city itself is a memorial." She says that she often wonders if she and her friends have some sort of special, even morbid, attraction to the capital of the Third Reich—if they chose Berlin because it is "the only place where you can live out fully your Holocaust neurosis." But a lot of Jews are not in Berlin "for the Holocaust," as the saying goes. They are Jews who chose Berlin, quite simply, for the reasons educated, assimilated Jews chose Berlin in the nineteen-twenties—because Berlin was cosmopolitan, it was experimental, it was exactly where they wanted to be.

These Jews are an élite, not so different from the Weimar élite in their passion for German culture. They are conductors like Barenboim, and novelists like Irene Dische, and curators like Amnon Barzel, who is about to open a Jewish museum that a Jewish architect named Daniel Libeskind designed. Some are German Jews. Some, like the theatre directors Thomas and Matthias Langhoff, are distinctively *East* German Jews. (Matthias's daughter, Anna, who is a playwright and a director herself, says that the problem growing up in the theatre in East Berlin was not being Jewish but being "other," being arty, being bored.) But most of Berlin's Jewish intelligentsia came here from other cities, and even from other countries, and, with the exception of Barenboim, they are not involved in the local debates about "memory projects" like Lea Rosh's memorial. They think of Rosh's memorial as an establishment obsession—as something that has very little to do with them. Barzel says the only debate about Jews that interests *them* is "the one between dead Jews and living Jews"—by which he means between that establishment of historians and Shoah-business people and the artists and intellectuals who know that "how we think together now is the future." Barzel, who in his time has put together museums of modern art for Florence and Prato, is already in trouble with the city for announcing that his museum here is going to promote "living" Jewish art instead of the frozen, folkloric stereotypes of Jews and Jewish history which in his opinion are another way of saying that Jewish culture "died" with the Holocaust. His view of a German Holocaust memorial is "I'm not against anyone who makes an effort to remember, but I think that all you can do with this area would be plant some green grass with a small stone in the middle: 'Remember the Holocaust.' " Anything else would be "art," and Barzel believes that Holocaust memorials have very little to do with art—that trying to "express" a holocaust kills any artistic impulse. He says that all an artist can do with the fact of the Holocaust is "to say 'Ah!' and then you have to hide."

STILL, when Rosh announced her memorial a lot of German artists started thinking about what the writer Eike Geisel once called "German 'solutions' to the Final Solution." A Kassel artist named Horst Hoheisel started collecting stones—palm-size stones, like the ones that Jews traditionally leave on graves—and a few years later he put a thousand and seven stones in a big glass cart, each one wrapped in a letter to a Kassel Jew who had died in a concentration camp. Schoolchildren wrote the letters. Hoheisel's plan in Kassel had been to involve those schoolchildren in thinking about the Holocaust by assigning each child the responsibility for one victim—making the child get to know that victim as a human being, with a name and a family and a history that was part of Germany's history. The children were given a book about the Jews of Kassel, from which, it seems, some of them simply copied the euphemisms of the Final Solution. Their letters used words like "verdict" for deportation order, "sent" for deportation to a death camp, "perished" for exterminated in a gas chamber. Hoheisel had originally wanted to keep children collecting stones. He wanted to cover all the Holocaust victims in Europe, and to end up with six million stones. He thought about bringing the stones to Berlin as a Holocaust memorial, but somewhere along the way he must have changed his mind, because he entered Lea Rosh's memorial competition with a project that involved tearing down the Brandenburg Gate and using *those* stones for a memorial. It was a "history of the perpetrators" sort of project, in its suggestion that Germans needed to sacrifice in order to commemorate, and, speaking symbolically, it was not really such a bad idea.

Eike Geisel was the person who told me about Hoheisel's stones. Geisel is not Jewish, but many Germans assume that he is, because he chronicles the Shoah business in the German press—and because, like Henryk Broder, he is mordant in his criticism. He says he is constantly amazed by the ingenuity of the "solutions" to the Final Solution—especially the ones like Hoheisel's, which have to do with the incantatory magic of numbering and naming. He refers to them collectively, and skeptically, as "the adopt-a-Jew movement." He thinks that in their emphasis on "We, as Germans, do this" they have more to do with Germany reinventing itself than with Germany thinking about its victims, and certainly Lea Rosh, whose byword is "We, as Germans, do this," would be hard put to it to contradict him. Himmler once made a famous speech in which he urged Germans not to weaken in their resolve



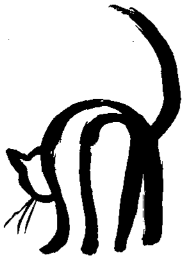


CINEMA CHIC

The Manhattan designer Isaac Mizrahi has his hands full these days, what with dressing up divas like (left to right) Cindy Crawford, Sandra Bernhard, and Linda Evangelista, and helping to hype "Unzipped," the new documentary about his fashionable life, directed by his ex-boyfriend, Douglas Keeve.

against Jews simply because "everyone knows a decent Jew," and Geisel suspects that some of the projects he writes about now have to do with putting this "decent Jew" back into German lives while leaving the real drama of the Holocaust—of complicity in, and even enthusiasm for, the Holocaust—almost entirely unexplored.

In a way, the decent Jew is the flip side of the coin called "the good German." Werner Angress, the historian, once told me he wondered whether his father was some good German's decent Jew—whether his father would have returned to Berlin and walked into the bank he ran and opened the door to the same clients and, in time, sent money to Lea Rosh for a Holocaust memorial in the city that sent him to die in Auschwitz. Angress himself thinks that at this late date building memorials to Germany's victims isn't a very healthy or useful occupation. "People get tired," he says. "They want to do something, feel something—but there comes a point where they can't do it any longer." He means that the danger may be less that Germans forget their victims than that they exhaust themselves remembering their victims. It leads to the same denial.



This may have something to do with why so many Berlin Jews worry about Lea Rosh's memorial—about the effect of what Nicola Galliner calls "this ultimate, terrible, forced, ersatz attempt to commemorate officially"—and why, in one way or another, other Berliners worry about it, too. They worry that monuments are slowly replacing the real *lieux de mémoire*—the camps themselves. They think it is only a matter of time before those camps are turned over to developers and supermarket chains. The historians who work at the Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen camps, which are close to Berlin, have already filed for what amounts to bankruptcy. Their research and operating budgets were cut this year, and Sachsenhausen today has so little money, even for repairs, that some of the buildings are collapsing—which means they are getting too hazardous for visits by the local schoolchildren, who are bused in routinely as part of their German-history classes. It distressed Galliner that Rosh's collaborator, Eberhard Jäckel, came back from a visit to Yad Vashem and went on television and said he was "so uplifted." Galliner told me she does not want Germans to feel "uplifted" by Holocaust memorials. She wants them to go to the camps and feel ashamed. She thinks that a huge memorial here in Berlin will give the indignity of the Holocaust a kind of "death dignity," and, like a lot of other Berlin Jews, she is puzzled that Israelis (including the people at Yad Vashem) have, by and large, been enthusiastic about Rosh's project. It may be that the farther you are, as a Jew, from the politics of memory in Germany, the more appealing that project seems, and it is certainly true that few Israelis have made the connection that Berliners make—between the dwindling budgets for places like Sachsenhausen and the promotion of wreath-throwing places in the new capital. Three-quarters of the people in Germany today were born after the war, and the camps are really all that is physically left of the Nazi years for them to learn from. Some, of course, don't learn. A professor I know who volunteered to help with a grade-school trip to Auschwitz told me later how horrified she was to see the children running around the camp, hooting and laughing; and a friend who visited Buchenwald one weekend this spring heard parents telling *their* children, "If you don't behave, we'll leave you here."

Not long ago, two young Berlin artists named Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock came up with a scheme to use the Holocaust-memorial project as a way of getting people to visit the camps. They entered the competition with a model that took the site and bisected it with a one-way street lined with bus stops; their idea was to fill it with big red buses that would leave on schedule for the various camps, and thus turn the memorial into the beginning of what Stih called "a journey to the real thing." She described it to me as an "anti-proposal," because she and Schnock never expected to win—nor, for that matter, did the artist who wanted to fence the site with barbed wire and leave it empty, so that Germans visiting the memorial would be puzzled and uneasy, and would have to start asking each other, "Where do we put these flowers? Why is there nothing here?" Stih and Schnock are not Jewish, and they are not native Berliners—Stih was born in Zagreb—but they share this with a lot of people their age who live in Berlin and *are* Jewish: they are wary of what Stih calls "the Holocaust genre." I know a Berlin Jewish novelist named Marc Svetov who sometimes describes himself by saying, "My grandfather was a Chicago labor racketeer, from Odessa, and he didn't think of himself as a victim." What Svetov means is that, fifty years after they *could* have built a Holocaust memorial, most Germans prefer to deal with Jews as a kind of mythic collectivity—"the Jewish victim"—rather than as ordinary people who might even have gangsters as grandparents. (This is a problem that the writer Wiglaf Droste calls the "what-happens-if-you're-robbed-and-the-robber-is-Jewish" problem.) In a way, Svetov agrees with the Jewish writer Rafael Seligmann, in Munich, who has argued against Lea Rosh's memorial, saying that most Jews want to stop seeing themselves as victims—that Auschwitz was not a Jewish invention; that it was Hitler's invention; that when Jews base their identity on Auschwitz they are letting Hitler mediate their relation to themselves. Rosh would say that the memorial is a German thing, and "not their thing."

THE year Lea Rosh started collecting signatures, the East German government started wondering what to do with its history museum on Unter den Linden. The museum was a repository of Communist kitsch, and not the sort of place that was likely to draw crowds in the new, liberated East Berlin, or to do much for the image of the born-again democrats running for office during the brief year that a free East Germany actually existed. No one here was surprised when the East Germans closed it abruptly in September of 1990, "for forty years of lying" about history—as if the objects, and not the East Germans who made those objects, had been doing the lying. It was well known then that Helmut Kohl wanted a new historical museum in place in Berlin. "You have to remember, the improvement of Germany's image is on Kohl's mind day and night," a friend here said after a story broke about Kohl's offering ten million dollars to the Holocaust Museum in Washington on the proviso that it devote a section to "the democratic rebirth of Germany." (The German government denied it.) Kohl was already building a historical museum in Bonn, but that was a museum devoted mainly to the history of West Germany. In Berlin he wanted a museum that would take the Germany that Bismarck had pieced together in 1871 and give it a coherence and a continuity—a "Germanness," so to speak—that went back centuries. He wanted people to see a Germany that was nobler, and certainly more enduring, than the Germany that in seventy-four years had started two world wars and caused the death of nearly fifty million people. The museum he had originally had in mind was for West Berlin—an extravagant Aldo Rossi complex that would cover the public gardens near the Reichstag, at a cost to Bonn of five hundred and fifty million dollars. But with East Germany to pay for, he couldn't afford Rossi. He took over the arsenal instead and gave it a new name, the German Historical Museum, and a new director, a Munich museum director named Christoph Stölzl. Last December, on the eve of the liberation celebrations, Stölzl opened an exhibit called "Witnessing German History." One critic called it "Nationalismus Lite."

Berliners tend to underestimate Kohl, because he is so provincial. He is porky and sentimental and a little befuddled, a little thick, like a postcard peasant sweating it out in a politician's suit—which, in a way, is what he is. They clip Helmut Kohl pictures and print them on T-shirts. (I had one of Kohl's helmeted head sticking out of the top of a NATO tank.) They trade Helmut Kohl jokes, which differ from, say, Polish jokes or North Dakota jokes only in that most of them are true. "Shrewd" is the most that Berliners usually grant their Chancellor—as in "not smart but shrewd"—which may be why he was shrewd enough to avoid anyone on the Berlin scene when he was looking for a curator to decide what images of Germany other Germans were going to see. Stölzl was regarded in history circles as too much of an aesthete for the job, and in art circles as too much of a bureaucrat, but conservatives in the west of Germany found him "culturally inspiring": he told them the good news about German history that they wanted to hear. He was—to quote a historian who has worked with Stölzl—someone for whom the aesthetics of "Germanness" would not be diluted by too much scholarship or too much soul-searching, or even too much accuracy.

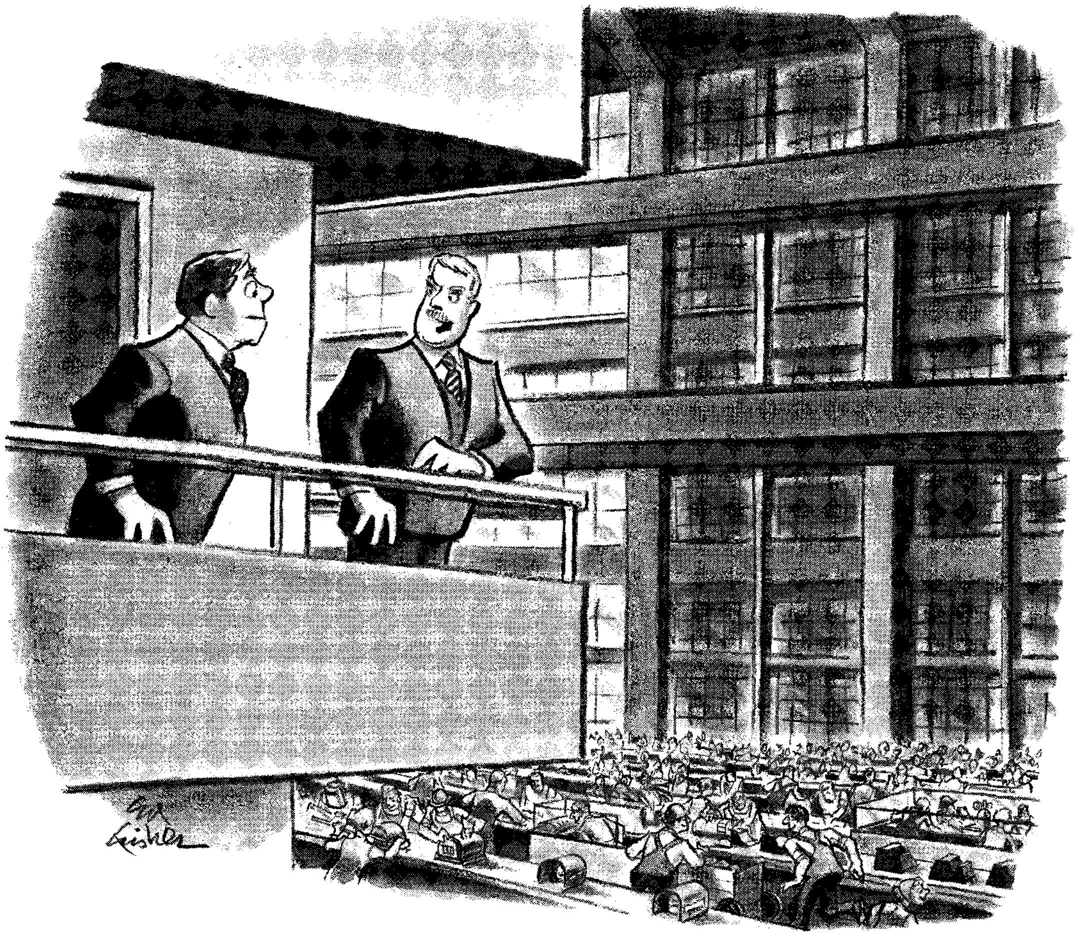
"I never think about cholesterol when I'm on vacation."

Stölzl told Kohl that for him German history began "with Luther sitting down and writing the German Bible." He told *me* he saw Germany "as a mainstream flowing through the history of the West." He saw it "as a river of the Enlightenment." One of the first things he bought for the museum was a 1776 German-language edition of the American Declaration of Independence; it was the original translation, and he spent three-quarters of a million dollars for it. When people wanted to know what the Declaration of Independence had to do with German history—or, for that matter, what the terra-cotta Diderot off the museum's great hall had to do with German history, or the Houdon George Washington that he had announced his intention of buying—Stölzl replied that the "pursuit of happiness" was an Enlightenment goal that Germans and Americans historically shared. (As it happens, Hannah Arendt thought so, too.) Stölzl said that the Declaration of Independence was "where we got *our* ideas of independence"; that it was "part of *our* history, like the French Revolution and the Commune, and the Crystal Palace"; that, once the museum had expanded, it would have pride of place between a big movie theatre where people could "look at democratic enlightenment in the rest of the world" and a permanent exhibit of masterpieces from Germany's own Enlightenment. Stölzl ignored the critics who said that as far as they were concerned Germany's problems came from its having *missed* the Enlightenment. Stölzl ignored the historians who explained that, in fact, Frederick the Great was so distressed at Germany's having missed it that he summoned Voltaire to instruct him and, having learned his history and practiced his very good French, settled back into his comfortable autocratic ways and sent the philosopher home. Stölzl ignored anyone who tried to remind him that Germany was never like England or France, or even Italy; that Germany had always been an ethnic idea, and only rarely an idea about citizenship; that Germany had never had a successful revolution, or even, until Weimar, a democratic parliamentary system.

Stölzl told me he was reclaiming Germany's "common history," which had almost been lost—to Hitler, to the shame that followed Hitler, to the federalism that followed Hitler. He dismissed Jürgen Habermas, who had pointed out that until the Federal Republic was founded, in 1948, and a proper constitution written, the only history Germans had in common was, unfortunately, the wrong history. But he was fulsome about Kohl. He said that Kohl "understood" Germany in ways that, say, Richard von Weizsäcker had not. Von Weizsäcker had had too many "misty, philosophical thoughts" about Germany; von Weizsäcker, with his complicated notions about "liberation," had been "a gray-haired man on a throne." What Germany needed was leaders like Kohl—no-nonsense, get-on-with-it, *progressive* leaders, who knew how unhealthy it was to mistake the "tributaries" of Germany's bad moments for the mighty current that had produced the Germany of 1995. Never mind that it was the Allied armies, defeating the old Germany, that had produced a new Germany. Stölzl doesn't want his museum to dwell on the "lows" of a century his exhibit flyer describes as "a period with highs and lows that are still a part of many people's experience." He thinks that the camps do that—which is certainly true. "Here you can go next door to a camp and see the authentic object" is the way he puts it. He says, "The Americans did a wonderful job with the Auschwitz thing in Washington, but you have to remember that it's a fake Auschwitz." He talks about "authenticity" like an antique dealer. He wants for his museum "the aesthetic opposition of authentic objects." It is a taste he shares with Kohl, who saw to it that his museum in Bonn displayed the pullover Gorbachev wore and the cardigan Kohl himself wore when the men were walking around Stavropol on a chilly day arguing about how much money Kohl was going to pay Gorbachev for East Germany.

A historian named Hans Wilderotter, who put together three shows for Stölzl before he and Stölzl parted company, says that history at the museum now is history about "gaga leaders and nice people": about how the Kaiser liked big boats, and so you had the German Navy; about how Hitler liked power, and so you had National Socialism. He says that any museum that pretends to represent Germany in the twentieth century has to involve an understanding of the choices Germans made, whereas the museum that Stölzl opened for Helmut Kohl refuses to implicate Germans in any choices, or even acknowledge that they had choices. Another historian, who worked for a while on "Witnessing German History," says that for him the problem was not just Stölzl—the problem was Germans. He thinks that people at the museum never really understood that in arranging art and objects into the aestheticized Germany that Stölzl wanted they were manipulating political perception, not to mention history. They were given a cheerful, progressive model called the West and were instructed to slip Germany into that model, and in the end it didn't matter whether or not that model was faithful to any real German experience. "A lot of the staff had no competence to weigh the social and political significance of the material," he told me. "To say 'revisionist' is to overestimate their capabilities and their intentions." Wiglaf Droste put it this way: "It shows that if you leave history to these people it's the end of history."

"Witnessing German History" begins in a long great hall, which, from what I could make out on a couple of visits, stands for the long mainstream on which Helmut Kohl is



"Productivity is up nine per cent since I made everyone a vice-president."

floating German history. The hall is adorned with objects of Light, from Goethe's dining-room chairs to a room-size fantasy of the founding of the Reich at the Palace of Versailles (with the rulers of the world in costume), to a Wilhelm Röntgen X-ray machine. Everything else is, so to speak, a tributary. Stölzl's First World War is a collection of helmets and some posters, and his Second World War opens with a bust of Hitler staring back, through Weimar, at Fritz Erler's famous poster of a helmeted fanatic with burning eyes. Weimar itself is squeezed into a room between them. There is a rack of Communist militia uniforms right next to a rack of Nazi militia uniforms. There is a glass man, which, according to Stölzl, "you can look into from the left and the right, eugenically, symbolically, and psychologically." Visiting Stölzl's Weimar, it is hard to imagine that Weimar was also a flowering of the arts or of politics, or even that it was the first German democracy. Stölzl's Weimar is "balanced" (which is to say that, true to current fashion, it turns Marx into Stalin, on a rampage in an earlier life), and it is "inevitable." It follows "inevitably" from the First World War, and Nazism follows inevitably from it—as if it were History, and not Germans, that set the country on its *Sonderweg* to Fascism. Even Stölzl's National Socialism is "balanced": a love letter from a captured German soldier "balances" a letter from the Plötzensee prison; a battlefield picture of a dead soldier "balances" the self-portrait of a Jew on his way to Auschwitz. The twelve dark years of Hitler take place in a small, dark room, and the camps are represented by one military map, which is so small that most people walk through "National Socialism" without noticing it at all.

Victoria Roberts

"Where is Madison Avenue? You might well ask."

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HELMUT KOHL is having second thoughts about Lea Rosh. By now, he is not so sure that having a Holocaust memorial in the capital is really going to help promote Germany's new image in the world. When he presented Rosh with a pricey chunk of central Berlin, he may have been thinking about a nice park, with another sentimental Kollwitz statue—something discreet, something to show the world that, whatever anyone said about Jews and Germans, their relations were tranquil; they had all been liberated on May 8, 1945, and the rest was "history." But Rosh wanted to build a monument that was, as she once said, big like the crime. She wanted a big public. A big budget. Big discussions. Big ideas. Her own idea was a vast subterranean Jewish star, which you would enter through gates like the gates of concentration camps—gates that said "*Arbeit Macht Frei.*" The architect for her star was a Swiss by the name of Harry Szeemann. It was his plan, and Rosh's, to build a series of rooms in the star, with wailing walls and "symbolic installations," and to commission, for the ground above it, a "monumental" piece of sculpture by someone like Richard Serra. The design was, even by monument standards, dreadful. It engendered a lot of protest and a lot of black humor, and in any event it was scrapped as soon as the Berlin Senat got involved in the project, in 1993, by pledging four million dollars. The Senat wanted to hold what could be called a competition as big as the crime, because Berlin has (this is the official term) "a democratic competition culture," and also because the memorial, with a total budget of twelve million dollars, was going to be the most expensive memorial project in Berlin's history, and the city wanted to have a say in whose project it was going to be. Bonn, which had also pledged four million dollars, wanted the same say. And so, of course, did Lea Rosh. The trouble began when it was time to name a jury: Bonn chose five people, Berlin chose five, and Rosh chose five, and their agreement was that no one could veto anyone else's choices. Stefanie Endlich, who writes about public art and describes herself as "the only public-art specialist" on the jury, was one of the Berlin jurors. She says that it wasn't a job she wanted. She told the Senat, "A monument is not what we need." She thought that the city should be spending its money on its Active Museum (which is not a museum at all but a lot of local groups that organize what Berliners call "memory projects"), or on a Holocaust-documentation center, or on the camps near Berlin, like Sachsenhausen. "I felt terrible joining that jury," she told me. "I had nightmares." She worried about the memorial turning into an *Ereignisstruktur*—a kind of "happening place," where people would be walked through the experience of victimhood and then go shopping, or go home to a nice lunch. She was skeptical about the project brief: "The power of contemporary art should create a synthesis enabling us to face this subject in sorrow, shock, and respect, and to remember it in shame and guilt. A place should be created where insight can grow." She didn't know what "synthesis" or "insight" meant when you were talking about the Holocaust, and she said so. When Rosh heard that Endlich was on the jury, she wrote her an open letter and sent it to Bonn, to the Jewish community, to the Senat. It said that Endlich was "against memory."

The jury started meeting in January of this year—a mishmash of politicians, bureaucrats, historians, artists, architects, and journalists, with different tastes, different priorities, and different people to report to. Some of those people had wanted to restrict the competition to Germans ("the perpetrators' school"), and some had wanted to open it to anyone in the world who had a design to offer—the idea being, as the East German poet Durs Grünbein put it, that the meaning of "Holocaust" was not something the Germans owned. They compromised. They said that "participants must have lived or worked in the Federal Republic of Germany for at least six months," and then they chose twelve "international artists" and paid each of them thirty-five thousand dollars to participate, too. Rosh told me the designs were "secret," but if you put in a Sunday afternoon at the Paris Bar and listened to the art gossip you eventually heard about Richard Serra's scooped-out granite bunker and Rebecca Horn's "meditation spiral" and Dani Karavan's garden of yellow coreopsis planted in the shape of a Jewish star. And in the end you began to wonder if they shouldn't be *kept* secret. Walter Jens, a Tübingen historian who served as the jury chairman, admitted in March of this year that there was "no aesthetic 'solution' " to the memory of mass death. But, as Henryk Broder wrote later, it was clear that the jurors were determined to find one. They voted in March, and found two, and then they opened a Holocaust-memorial exhibit at an old East Berlin government hall, and Berliners finally got a look at the five hundred and twenty-eight designs that had been placed in competition.

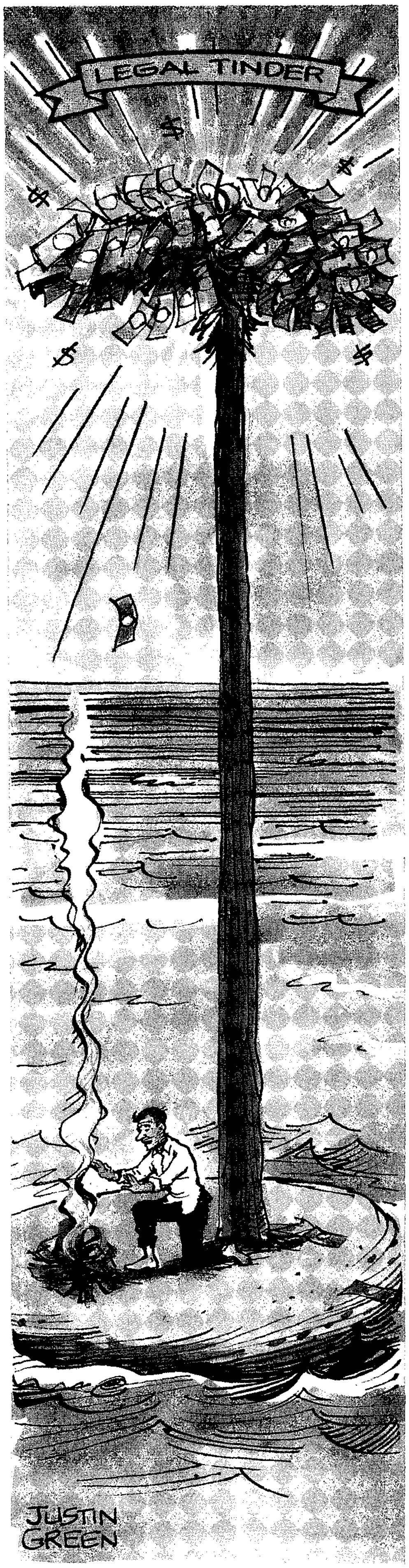
Eike Geisel, writing in *Konkret*, said he was horrified by the exhibit—not least, he told me after his first visit, because he was "the only one not laughing." And Broder, writing in *Der Spiegel*, called it "a field site for anthropologists, psychologists, and behaviorists" and for anyone else interested in the soul of "a confused nation . . . that will enlist its victims to purify itself." The models were not only grotesque, they were gigantesque. One of them was a kind of silo—"a drum," according to the man who designed it, "for the blood of six million Jews." Another was a field covered by six million glass shards. There was a giant oven, to be fired day and night, like an eternal light; and there was a Ferris wheel hung with deportation freight cars instead of baskets; and there was a salt sea, a sea of tears, with a slowly corroding block of steel floating in it; and there was a huge sealed building shaped like Europe, with twelve million "eye holes" bored into the roof. One of the competitors quoted Heidegger on the "*Existentiell*," and one thought that the Star of David was "a Jewish symbol of oppression," and one said that he wanted to "engage" visitors in his project by collecting their combs for five to ten years and building a monument with *them*. The competition may have been democratic, but it did not do much for democracy, or art or memory or Lea Rosh's budget, and it did not even begin to settle the argument about "victims." The two finalists went back to their drawing boards with instructions to elaborate on their "feasibility studies," neither of which was clear, but what *was* clear was that they disagreed about victims. One of the finalists was a Cologne architect named Simon Ungers. His project was big—"monumental, unavoidably present," the jury said. More precisely, it was a seventy-eight-thousand-square-foot quadrangle enclosed by double-T steel girders on concrete blocks, with the names of the death camps pierced through them and thus repeated, in sunlight and shadow, on the ground. It was not beautiful, and it was certainly not "uplifting," but it seemed to open up the definition of victims, which the other project did not.

The other project—it was designed by a Berlin group working under a local painter named Christine Jackob-Marks—was very specific to the jury's brief, which had been to create a memorial specifically to "the murdered Jews of Europe." It covered the entire site with a hundred-and-eight-thousand-square-foot tilted concrete slab—a "tombstone bigger than a football field," as Broder described it—in which the names of four million two hundred thousand Jewish victims of the Holocaust would eventually be engraved, and on which eighteen stones from Masada, one for each of the death camps, would be scattered. The problem was that Jackob-Marks's stones were boulders; Eike Geisel estimated that, given the cost of transporting boulders from Masada (assuming there *were* boulders left at Masada) and the cost of pouring more than a hundred thousand square feet of concrete, Jackob-Marks was talking not twelve million dollars but more like a hundred and twenty million dollars. He figured that it would probably take thirty years to engrave the names, and that, if you were going to be able to read them at all, it would probably take *three* football fields. That was how many Jews died in the Holocaust. It was something, he thought, that Germans still had trouble understanding.

LATE in June, Lea Rosh announced that she was going to build the tombstone. She had not recalled her jury. She was not interested in any more encounters with Berlin's "democratic competition culture." She met with the Deputy Home Minister, from Bonn; with the Berlin Senators for Building and for Culture; and, from what was described as "Rosh's group," with Edzard Reuter, the old chairman of Daimler-Benz (which was supposed to contribute to the project), and the Daimler-Benz public-relations director. And then she chose the tombstone, which seems to be what she had had in mind to do from the beginning. The Minister from Bonn demurred—he did not really like the idea of such a big tombstone, though he said he could live with the tombstone—but Rosh, who loved the tombstone, didn't care. She said later, "It was the past that was gigantic, not the memorial slab." She was prepared for *some* criticism, but certainly not the barrage she got. It came instantly, and it came from everywhere. It came from a Frankfurt architect named Salomon Korn, who had been the only German Jew on Rosh's jury, and who hated the tombstone. It came from Ignatz Bubis, who said that if Lea Rosh started engraving the names of Holocaust victims—and nothing else—on a tombstone she was going to end up with a thousand Moses Rabbinowitsches whom no one could tell apart. It came from Amnon Barzel, at the Jewish Museum, who had challenged the concept early on, saying that Masada was about a fight where everyone died, and had nothing to do with the Holocaust, or with Jews who survived the Holocaust. It came from journalists, who called Rosh "Stepmother Courage," and said that her tombstone was "a big stone covering the past." It came from developers who had plans for putting up public housing on Wilhelmstrasse, near the Pariser Platz, and who wanted their tenants to look down at the statue of Goethe, in the Tiergarten, and not on a five-acre concrete slab with the names of dead Jews written on it. And it came from politicians, who knew that, given all the trouble with skinheads in Germany lately, the tombstone would have to be "protected" at night with floodlights and policemen, and maybe even dogs, and who pointed out that floodlights and policemen and dogs had never done much for Germany's "image" in the world. Rosh gave way on some points: no boulders from Masada; more "information" about the victims. But she started insisting that *she* was a victim, too—of the press, of the pols, even of the Jews who complained. She didn't think that Jews had a right to complain. She put it this way: "It's the successors of the perpetrators who are building this memorial, not the Jews." It looked like the beginning of a scandal—which, from Helmut Kohl's point of view, meant a scandal about Jews and Germans that he would soon be reading about on the front pages of *Le Monde* and the Jerusalem *Post* and the New York *Times*. Two days later, he vetoed the tombstone. He said he was looking forward to seeing a Holocaust memorial in Berlin, but he thought that the memorial Lea Rosh had in mind was "monstrous and without dignity." ("Gigantomania" was a word he used.) He called for "a pause for reflection . . . to be followed by a public discussion" to find a new design—one that would inspire "a bigger consensus." Then the mayor of Berlin said that he was also for things like reflection and discussion and consensus. In a few days' time, the only politician in town who had anything good to say about Christine Jackob-Marks's design was Wolfgang Nagel, the Senator for Building. Nagel thought that the design should stand; he said he liked "the naming," but his reason seemed mainly to be that he had just spent a million dollars of Berlin's money running the competition to choose it.

Kohl, right now, is holding on to the land he promised Lea Rosh. Rosh, for her part, says that the land is hers. She has asked the Berlin Senat to decide. After thirty years in German television, Rosh is thick-skinned and vindictive. The fight excites her. Kohl doesn't intimidate her any more than the historians intimidated her when they said that Lea Rosh was "an amateur of memory" and did memory no real service. Her view of the historians is "They think they own history. They're scared of losing it." And that is probably her view of Kohl. I remember that the day I met her she got on the phone to answer an invitation to some sort of cultural-prize ceremony, and demanded that her name be put on the invitation, "like Rita Süssmuth's name." Rita Süssmuth is the president of the Bundestag. She was presenting the prize. But Rosh wanted to present it. "I have contributed much more than Rita Süssmuth!" she barked into the telephone. She meant more for Germany. She wanted to be on camera. She wanted to make her pitch. ("It's really *her* tombstone," Eike Geisel said later.) I almost admired her.

Rosh used to talk about going to the *Deutsche Volk*—the German people—with her project. She talked her way into free "Holocaust memorial spots" on twenty-one television stations. She persuaded the publisher Bertelsmann to cover the cost of five million flyers. She got free advertising space in most of the German press, and even free forms for her contributors, courtesy of the Landesbank Berlin. She even, as Geisel had predicted, invited every German to adopt a Jewish victim with his check. Her friend and fund-raiser Inge Borck says that she got a lot of envelopes from "ordinary people"—five marks, ten marks, the Christmas-card-sale proceeds from a Catholic church, the collection from a Berlin kindergarten—but no "big money." The chairman of Bosch had promised to



contribute, but the money was not forthcoming, and neither was the money from Daimler-Benz, despite the fact that Rosh had been careful to put Reuter on her memorial board and even to include him in the meeting at which she chose the tombstone. (Stefanie Endlich says Rosh should have remembered that after years of putting off paying reparations to survivors who were forced to work in its wartime factories Daimler-Benz came up with less than fifteen million tax-deductible dollars.) So Rosh counted on the German people. In the end, they gave her two hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

It may be that the German people were never a very promising prospect, because what's left in Germany, after all the revising and reclaiming and renaming and cleaning up, is still the past, and the people who would like to keep it. This spring, a man at the German tourist office in New York unearthed a document about discouraging "Jews, blacks, Asians, and Hispanics" from visiting Germany and says he was fired for it; an old professor from the technical college in Aachen admitted to being the missing S.S. Hauptsturmführer in charge of supplying equipment for medical experiments at concentration camps; the German security police in Karlsruhe announced that the incidence of anti-Semitic crimes had been rising steadily for a year. The list goes on, and it doesn't take long to understand that the teen-age skinheads torching foreigners and bombing synagogues are only one part of Germany's "Nazi problem." The real problem has to do with another kind of list, a list of questions: When will the past be over? Should it be over? What happens to memory then? Wiglaf Droste says that he left the theatre after "Schindler's List" with a crowd of people who were blowing their noses and shaking their heads as if they had never heard of the Holocaust until Steven Spielberg thought to tell them about it—and this despite the camp visits and the books and the pictures and the vast and profitable and ambiguous industry of the Shoah business. Droste thinks that if people are blowing their noses and shaking their heads like that all over Germany a Holocaust memorial is not going to settle the country's "Jewish question" any more than the Wehrmacht officers who tried to kill Hitler a year before the "liberation," and who had wanted to empty the camps and ship the survivors to Canada, would have solved it with a couple of boats.

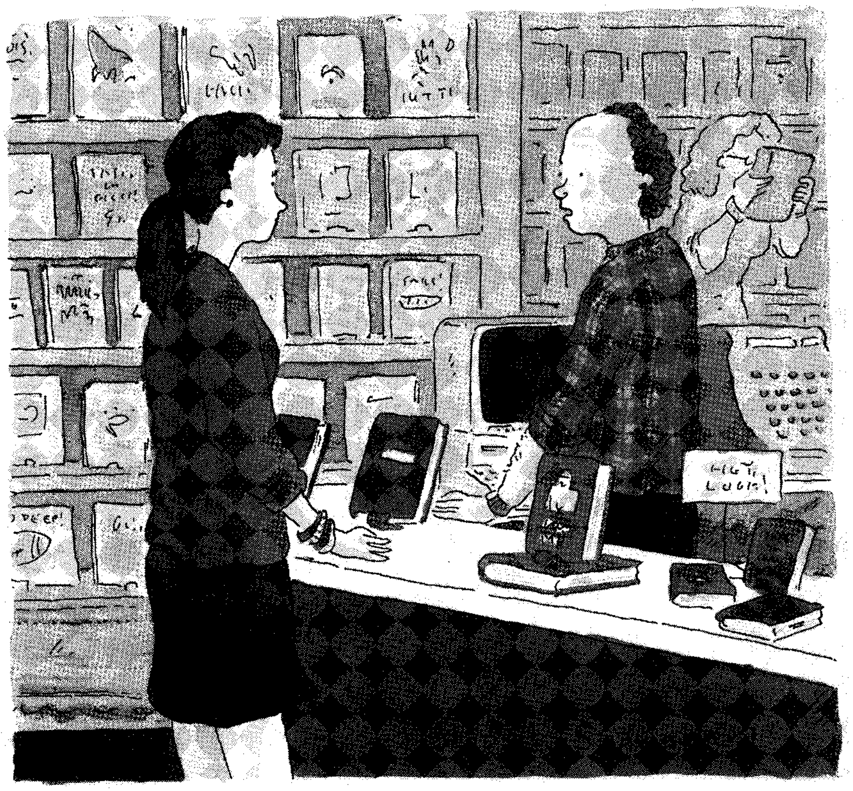
LAST winter, I met a professor here named Gert Mattenklott. He wasn't on Rosh's jury, and he wasn't a historian—he teaches comparative literature at the Free University of Berlin—but, like Rosh, he had a Jewish grandfather, and he told me he had always been interested in what he calls "the culture of remembrance." Two years ago, he put together an exhibit about memory and monuments which travelled all over Germany; today, he is by way of being Berlin's "memorial expert," and it is his opinion that "the passion for memorials in Berlin, where everything is symbolic but vitality happens somewhere else," has had a kind of neutralizing effect on the meaning of anything built here.

Mattenklott thinks that most Berlin monuments are destined to become "all-purpose receptacles of guilt," whose meaning changes every couple of years, with the politics of the moment, and even the prejudices of the moment. He likes to say that the only valuable thing about monuments is the discussion they provoke: they give "memory" an airing. "Memory is fluid, like writing," he told me. "You can't put memory into a monument." As a writer himself, and a student of other writers, he looks for memory now "in used-book stores, in the reminiscences of old Jews"—in people who still inhabit the interstices between private memory and public discourse. He says that when he started hearing about a monument to the Holocaust in Berlin his first thought was "Where's the money for Buchenwald?" He told me that thinking about Buchenwald (where the stump of Goethe's beech tree sits in the middle of the camp, and the guides have been known to ask if you're there for the poet or the Holocaust) and then thinking about Lea Rosh's memorial "was like taking one step forward into reality and three steps back into a past expanding like a huge desert." He said, "You can't build a monument to a paradox. You can talk, you can write, but you can't 'create' out of the trauma of the Holocaust." He thinks that only one German artist has even come close to understanding this: a sculptor named Jochen Gerz, who built a memorial in Hamburg, using columns that sank, little by little, into the ground, and materials that disappeared—materials that acknowledged

the tragic fact that commemoration, like memory, is fragile and ephemeral, and in no way adequate to the "history" of what happened.

There is a word in German—one of those long compound words that Germans put together to extend a concept. The word is *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, and it means "management of the past"—but always in the sense of mastering the past, even of manipulating the past. Mattenklott used it when we talked. Earlier, Werner Angress had used it. He had told me that 1995 was going to be the year of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, and that I would find it in everything I looked at here—the liberation celebrations, the new historical museum, the Holocaust-memorial project itself. Most of my Berlin friends, in one way or another, said this, too. Hansjorg Geiger, who runs the Stasi archives in East Berlin, used the word *Schlusstrich*. He said he got interested in "1995" because it was like the *Schlusstrich*, the line, that he found at the end of Stasi files. He thought that 1995 was going to "strike a line through history. Finished. Over and done with. Gone." Geiger believes that one of the reasons Germans are so fascinated by what he calls "the Stasi past"—the story of the secret police in East Germany, and its millions of informers, and its tens of millions of pages of reports and accusations and surveillance transcripts—is that the Stasi past has become a metaphor for the Nazi past, and for German complicity in that past. A metaphor, perhaps, that Germans can "manage." A couple of years ago, Geiger went to Israel, and—like Lea Rosh and Eberhard Jäckel—he made a pilgrimage to Yad Vashem. He says that ever since then, when he thinks about being German, about what it means to be a human being with a holocaust in your history, he thinks about what he read on a panel at the exit of Yad Vashem: "The secret of redemption is remembrance." The sentence is ambiguous, but Geiger suspects that anything written, as this was, by an eighteenth-century Galician rabbi was meant to be ambiguous, because when *he* thinks about a Holocaust memorial here in Berlin he does not think, Redemption. He thinks, A ten- or fifteen-second exculpation.

Jens Reich—a biologist better known to Germans as the man who led the citizens' movement in East Berlin when the Wall was coming down—told me not long ago that Rosh's memorial project had left him "at a loss." He worried about "all this management of the past." He said, "It seems that the more we commemorate, the more we dilute the seriousness of commemoration; the better we describe, the less we mean." Reich is something of an East German von Weizsäcker, in that he is an intellectual, like von Weizsäcker, and is given to the same sort of "misty, philosophical thoughts." (In fact, he hoped to succeed von Weizsäcker; he ran for President last year.) Reich says things that successful politicians in Germany never say. Sometimes he says he's speechless. He said "I'm speechless" when he first visited a concentration camp and everyone there was waiting to hear him say something. He liked it that Roman Herzog, who got the job he wanted, said *he* was speechless at Auschwitz in February. "To digest Auschwitz, to digest that information, to be able to think of something 'original' to say in such a context—how is that possible?" Reich asked me. He spent the war in Dresden, and he remembers the bombings. He can smell the asphalt melting and the first corpses, and the piles of bodies waiting to be burned, but he says that he can't turn those memories into "commemoration" or else he'd have to talk about who bombed first and "commemorate" Coventry and Leningrad, and then he'd have to go on "commemorating"—Sarajevo, Rwanda, Chechnya—and in the end he wouldn't be any closer to the mystery of the Holocaust, or of any holocaust, or to the question that haunts him: "How did this happen in the middle of Europe in a 'civilized' century?"



"It's not in stock, but I can have it written."

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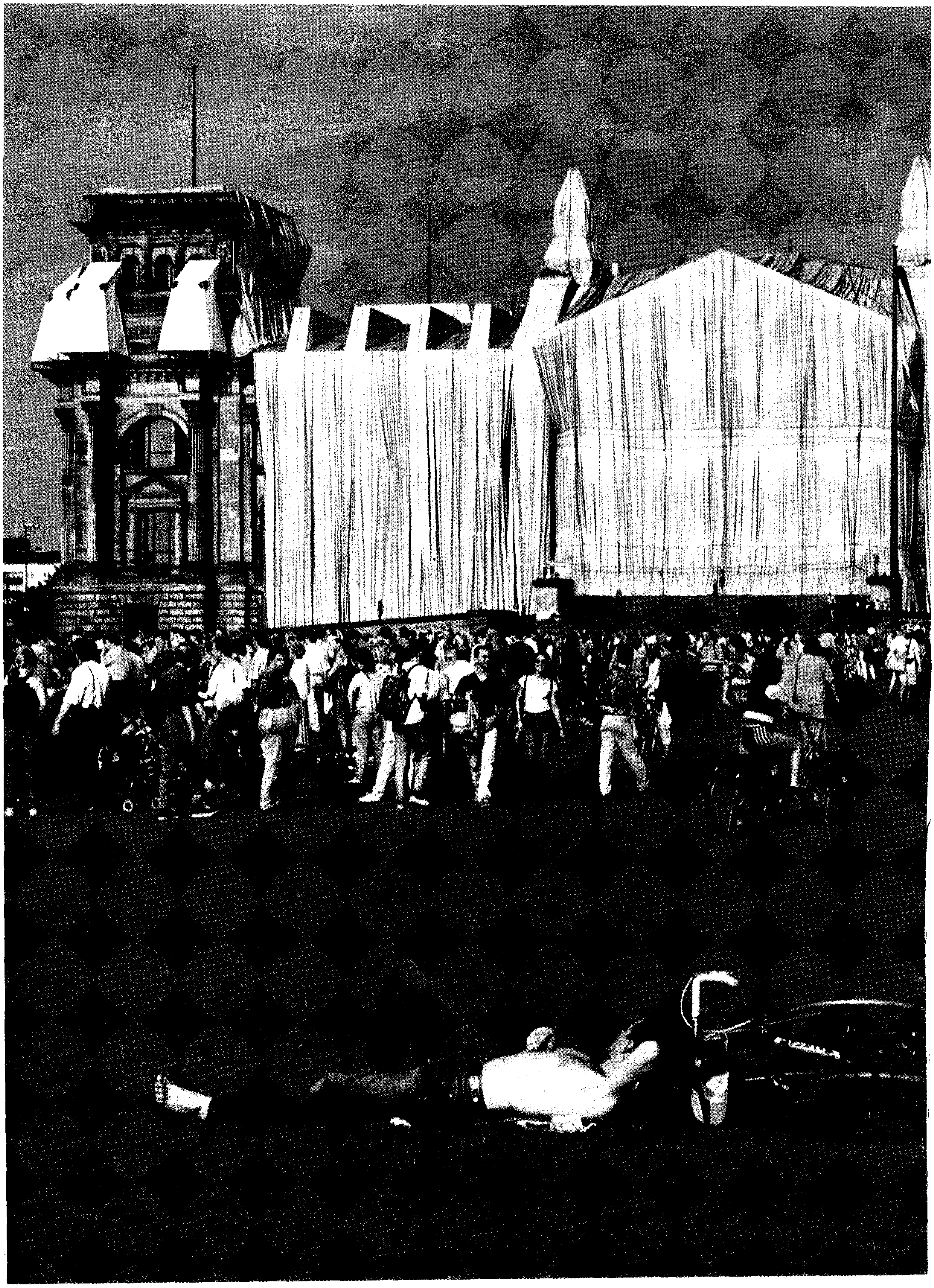
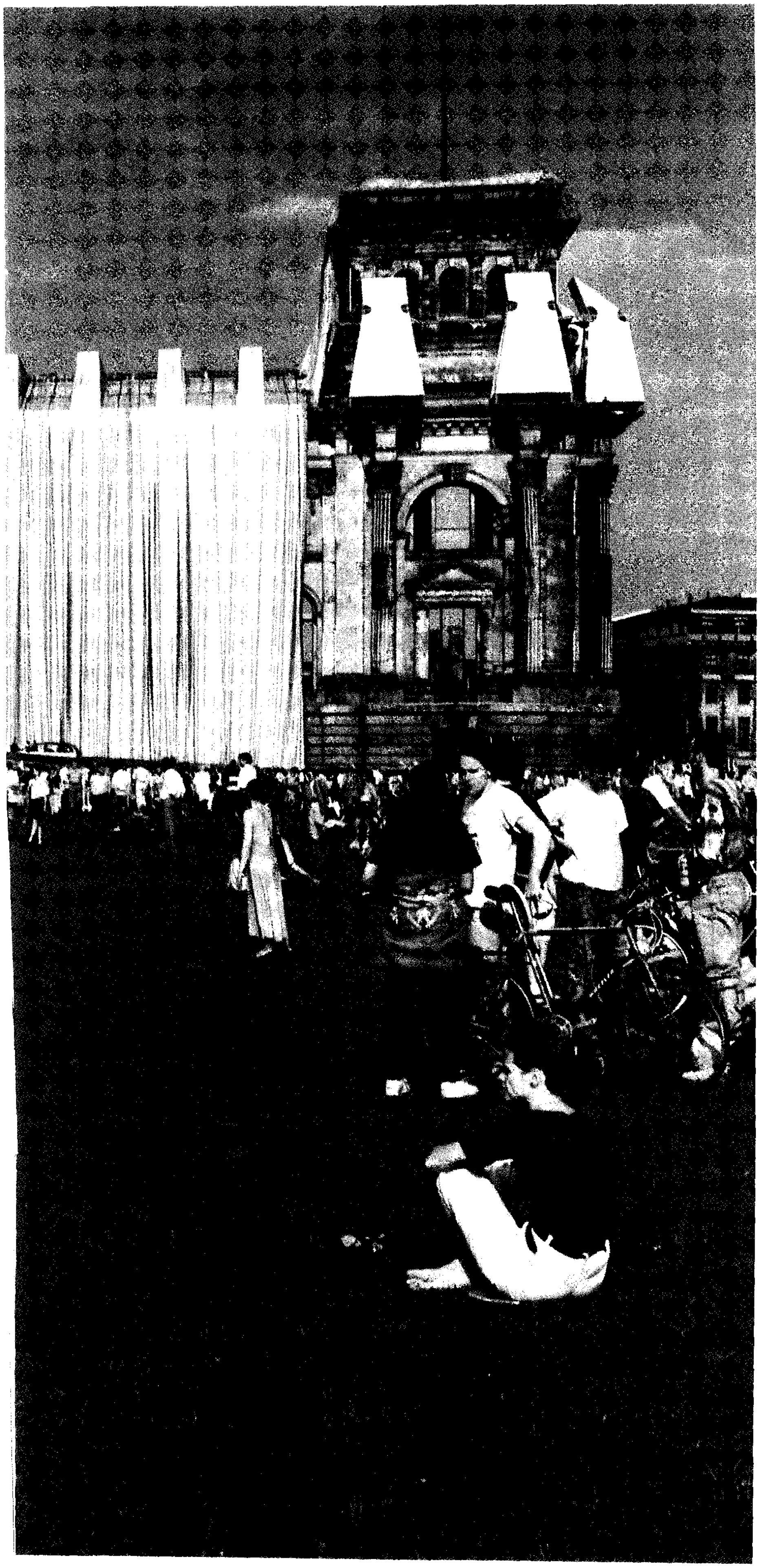
WHEN Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock submitted their bus-stop project to Lea Rosh, they had already finished one memorial project for Berlin—a project that many Berliners think is the only memorial that even begins to approach the experience of being Jewish in Germany under Hitler. It isn't a monument. It consists of eighty silk-screened aluminum signs—outsize street signs, really—that Stih and Schnock have attached to lampposts all over the quiet residential neighborhood called Schöneberg. Schöneberg used to be a *bürgerlich* Jewish neighborhood. It was rich and, as its name says, pretty—"Jewish Switzerland," people called it—and in this it was not much different from other rich, pretty Berlin neighborhoods, except that





sixteen thousand Jews lived there, Jews who thought of themselves as so "German" that a handful of them were still in Schöneberg in 1943, waiting for other Germans to save them. They were on the last train out to Auschwitz. What Stih and Schnock wanted to do in Schöneberg was to trace the small, everyday, "ordinary" discriminations—the orders and prohibitions and decrees—that led to Auschwitz by taking sixteen thousand assimilated German Jews and slowly, methodically, placing them outside the pale of German life and German empathy and German compassion. On one side of their signs they printed bright, simple storybook pictures: a stage curtain, a bunch of radishes, a bathing suit, a cat, a pail of milk. On the other side they printed the orders that went with the pictures: Jews are forbidden to act in theatres (March 5, 1934); Jews are forbidden to grow vegetables (March 22, 1938); Jews are forbidden to go swimming (December 3, 1938); Jews are forbidden to own pets (May 15, 1942); Jews are forbidden to buy milk (July 10, 1942).

The first of the signs I saw was right in the middle of Schöneberg, on the Bayerischer Platz, near the town hall. It was a picture of a red bench, and it said, "Jews can sit in the Bayerischer Platz only on benches marked in yellow." I got a map and started walking, and after a while I grew used to the signs. I knew how "normal" it must have seemed to other Germans when, in a few years' time, Jews were forbidden to do anything but die—and how by then nobody but Jews thought much about it. I followed the signs around the neighborhood until I got to a sign with the last Schöneberg deportation order—and, finally, to a sign with what could be called the first official revision of the Holocaust. On one side was a picture of a black file box with a blank label. On the other side was an order issued on February 16, 1945. It said, "All files involving anti-Semitic activity are to be destroyed." People in Schöneberg today live with the signs. They are not "art." They are like small memories, and, in their depth and simplicity, they leave very little to say. ♦

Left: This summer, the wrapping of the Reichstag in Berlin by the artist Christo and his wife, Jeanne-Claude, also questioned the symbolism of monuments. Photograph by Helmut Newton.

THE PUBLISHING WORLD

WASN'T SHE GREAT?

When did publishing cease to be a gentlemen's profession?
In the sixties, when Jacqueline Susann arrived to call everybody's bluff.

BY MICHAEL KORDA

When I joined Simon & Schuster, in the late summer of 1958, book publishing still thought of itself as a respectable profession. The business was being run, for the most part, by men in suits or in donnish tweeds, with pipes, who were either Ivy League Wasps or Jews whose highest ambition was to be mistaken for Wasps. Of course, it was a façade, paper-thin and getting thinner, but it was how book publishers wanted to be perceived, and mostly were. Bennett Cerf, the co-owner of Random House, might flutter around the edges of show business as a Broadway groupie, a joke anthologist, and a panel member on the TV quiz show "What's My Line?," but when it came to his publishing persona he expected to be taken seriously: he worried about books "in bad taste," with the result that he failed to buy "Lolita" when it was offered to him. My boss, Max Schuster, had launched Simon & Schuster with the first book of crossword puzzles, back in 1924—he had attached a pencil to each copy—but as a publisher he sought to load the S. & S. list with works of philosophy, history, and literature; he, too, turned down the opportunity to publish "Lolita." Alfred and Blanche Knopf were so notorious for good taste that I doubt whether they were even *offered* "Lolita."

Then, in 1966, came Jacqueline Susann's "Valley of the Dolls," a huge best-seller: it brought together for the first time the worlds of Hollywood, gossip, and Broadway press-agentry, to sell a novel whose subjects included all those things. Jackie, then forty-seven, had spiky false eyelashes, a chain-smoker's gravelly voice, and glittery dresses; her feisty, tough-broad image seemed to many like the beginning of the end—show-business vulgarity at the door of the temple of culture.

Jackie was in many ways a much livelier creation than her novels. She had arrived in New York from her native Philadelphia in 1936, at the age of eighteen, a beauty-contest winner with acting ambitions. Her father was a successful, if somewhat flashy, society portrait painter and a charming, handsome, high-living womanizer—the model, apparently, for most of Jackie's cruel, sexy heroes. In 1939, Jackie married Irving Mansfield, a press agent, promoter, and "producer"—of what, it was somewhat hard to say, or find out. In the forties and fifties, she had a checkered career as a stage actress, a model, and a radio-and-television personality. "Show biz," as Jackie always called it, drew her like a magnet, and she was around celebrities so much that she became a kind of celebrity herself. The only thing she didn't have was a talent, or even a "gimmick," but both problems were solved in 1954, when Jackie saw a poodle in the window of a Lexington Avenue pet shop, bought her, and named her Josephine. A star was born—two stars, actually. With the publication, in 1963, of "*Every* Night, Josephine!," Josephine became America's most famous dog, though the book was as much about Jackie's life seen through the eyes of a dog as about Josephine herself.

Jackie's next book was "Valley of the Dolls," and not only did it become a worldwide No. 1 best-seller in hardcover and mass-market paperback but it was made into a successful movie as well. Jackie, it seemed, understood by instinct that her readers were ready for the raw side of love—for crude behavior, abortions, suicide. Perhaps more important, she and Irving created a new way of selling a novel—a shameless blend of promotion, personal appearances, and celebrity tie-ins. This kind of thing was old hat for the theatre and for movies but had been unknown in book publishing. You couldn't pick up a newspaper or turn on the television set without hearing about Jackie and "Valley of the Dolls." Jackie got up at dawn to visit the warehouses that shipped her books, in order to shake hands with the men who loaded the trucks and with the drivers who delivered the books to the stores.

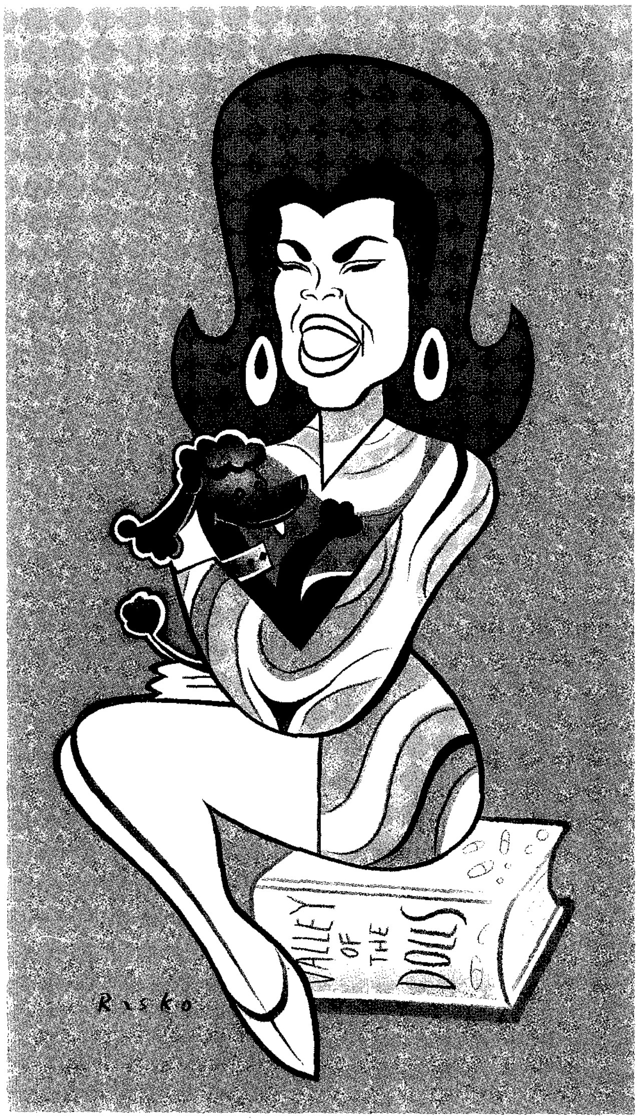
Publishers lusted after her sales, but hesitated to "get into bed" (a favorite Irving-Jackie phrase) with the Mansfields. Random House distributed "*Every* Night, Josephine!" and "Valley of the Dolls," but, technically, the two titles were published by Bernard Geis, an outsider who had earlier made a best-seller of Helen Gurley Brown's first book, "Sex and the Single Girl." Although the Random House sales force sold his list, Bernard Geis's name was the imprint on the title page, which enabled Random House to claim not to be Jackie's publisher. The only person who wasn't fooled (or satisfied) by this arrangement was Jackie: she resented not getting the kind of respect that other best-selling authors, especially Bennett Cerf's star author, Truman Capote, enjoyed. (Jackie and Capote later traded insults on separate TV-talk-show appearances: Capote likened her to "a truck driver in drag," and Jackie made savage fun of Capote's lisp.) Jackie envied Capote, because he was an esteemed author writing for a major publisher. And so it was that, not long after the success of "Valley of the Dolls," Jackie swept into my life.

A variety of motives led Jackie and Irving to approach Simon & Schuster about a deal for her second novel, "The Love Machine." She wanted revenge against Random House in general, and Bennett Cerf in particular, for not accepting her as Capote's equal; she wanted revenge against Bernard Geis, for what she saw as a host of major and minor misdeeds; but most of all she wanted status, which is to say the No. 1

place on a big-time publisher's fiction list, top editors, first-class treatment all the way—or, as Irving Mansfield put it, "She wanted to be loved."

The person she initially wanted to be loved by was Robert Gottlieb, who was then the editor-in-chief of S. & S., soon to be the top editor at Alfred A. Knopf, and, after that, the editor of *The New Yorker*. Bob was erudite, literary, a star in his own right. In 1961, he had discovered Joseph Heller's "Catch-22" and made it a great success, despite the skepticism of Max Schuster and Henry Simon. Needless to say, he was exactly the editor Jackie Susann sought. She wanted the best, and the fact that he seemed unobtainable for someone like her made him all the more irresistible to her. "Bob," she said, "has class up the gazoo," and class was what she felt she needed now that she had fame and fortune. For his part, Bob might have gritted his teeth and edited Jackie Susann had he not intended to jump ship and move to Knopf. He helped persuade a nervous Max Schuster and his partner, Leon Shimkin, to take the plunge, and, in the wake of his departure, Jonathan Dolger, another Simon & Schuster editor, and I became Jackie's editors.

It was thus that, one afternoon in the spring of 1968, accompanied by Dolger, I first met Jackie Susann: we called on her in her apartment at the Hotel Navarro, on Central Park South. Jonathan and I were the first people at S. & S. who had actually read a portion of the manuscript that Bob Gottlieb had bought. Irving Mansfield and Jackie's lawyer, Artie Hershkowitz, who appeared to have no other client, had sold Jackie's book without providing the publisher with a single page to read. Dick Snyder, then the associate publisher of Simon & Schuster, and I, having inherited the project, had endured several brutal months of negotiations and had eventually agreed to a contract that contained so many hitherto undreamed-of clauses in Jackie's favor that it was necessary to treat the document as if it were a state secret, lest other S. & S. authors learn what was in it. When we had expressed anxiety about the unwritten manuscript, Irving told us that it was Jackie (and the example of "Valley," then approaching ten million copies sold) that he was selling, and not, as he put it indignantly, "a goddam pile of paper." It was only after the ink was dry on the contracts that we received, after much prodding of the other party, about a hundred pages of what Irving referred to, very optimistically, as "rough draft."



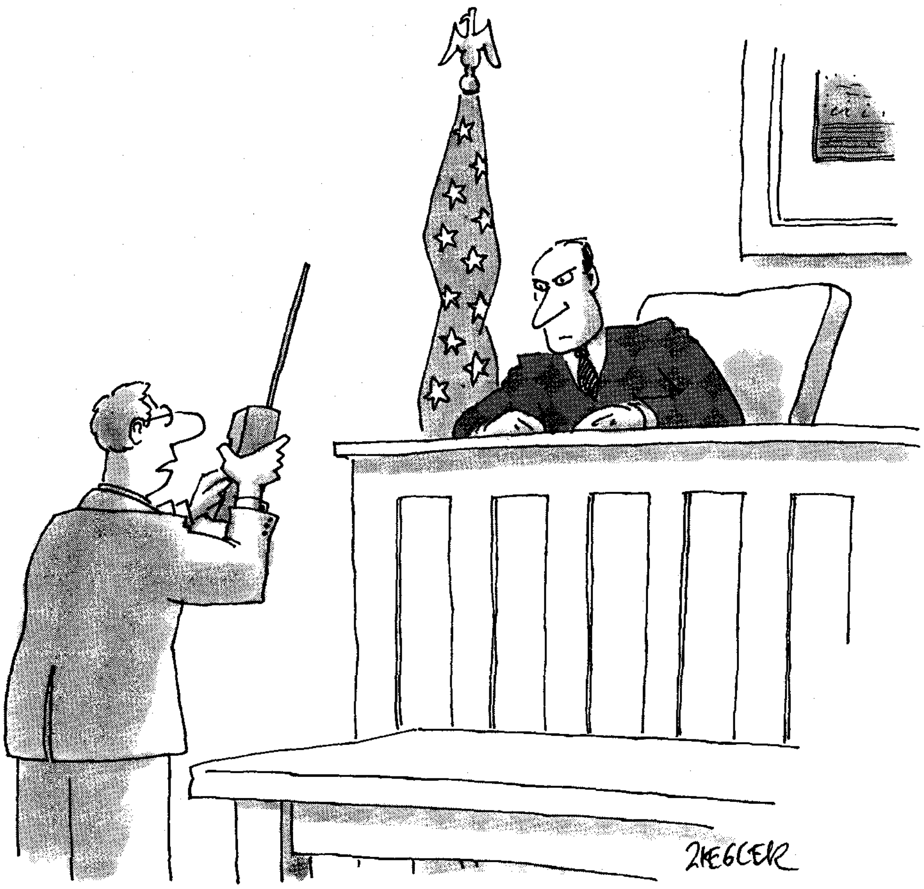
Publishers lusted after Susann's sales, but hesitated to "get into bed" (a favorite Jackie phrase) with her.

ROBERT RISKO

The prospect of turning these pages into publishable prose in the time we were allotted had rendered us briefly speechless. Jackie wrote on pink paper, and she had apparently not yet discovered the "Shift" key on her typewriter (a pink IBM Selectric): she wrote everything in capital letters, like a long telegram, and added revisions in a large, forceful circular hand, with what looked like a blunt eyebrow pencil. Neither the plot of the novel nor its structure was discernible, despite numerous "notes to the editor" written on cocktail napkins from the Beverly Hills Hotel and Danny's Hide-A-Way, a show-business bar and steak house on East Forty-fifth Street. We had confided our misgivings to Dick Snyder, but his instructions had been simple and Napoleonic. "Just turn it into a book somehow, that's all I ask," he said, and that was that. Failure was not an option. Too much was at stake—his career, mine, the whole question of whether S. & S. could make a go of high-stakes "commercial" fiction.

Our mission had been made more difficult by the fact that the Mansfields practiced the Hollywood art of holding out until the very last moment. They had resisted all attempts to pin them down on such matters as when, exactly, Jackie intended to finish the book, and whether she would listen to our suggestions for revisions. All that Irving Mansfield would say, with a chuckle that was a trademark of his conversation ("heh, heh"), was that we shouldn't worry—Jackie was a pro. In the meantime, would I remind Snyder that Jackie's "publicity girl," Abby Hirsch, flew first class, the same as Jackie and Irving (she accompanied them everywhere, carrying Jackie's wig box); that Jackie always got a stretch limo; that the driver had to wear a black suit and a chauffeur's cap; and that she expected the Presidential suite in any hotel we sent her to. This was all minor crap, Mansfield had said, hardly even worth mentioning, but I should understand that if Jackie thought we were going to nickel-and-dime her over chickenshit stuff like this, the way Bernie Geis had, she might conclude that we didn't really love and respect her, and her unhappiness would inevitably slow up her work on the book ("heh, heh").

I bore this in mind all the way through the lobby of the Mansfields' apartment



"I'm sorry, Your Honor, but I just don't have the time right now to go to prison."

building and in the elevator to their apartment. Jackie herself opened the door for Jonathan Dolger and me. She was tall, broad-shouldered, and large-bosomed, and she had a deep, husky voice. She wore heavy stage makeup: her face was an improbable dark tan, her lips were a glossy blood-red, and her spiky eyelashes were truly alarming. She offered her cheek, and I kissed it. "Irving's out walking Josephine," she told us. She appraised me carefully, then said, "Christ, I thought I was going to get a top editor. You look just like a kid."

"And you look just like a girl," I said, stealing Milton Greene's line to Marilyn Monroe.

It had worked on Marilyn, and it worked on Jackie. She gave me a big grin, and took us into the tiny kitchen. She opened the refrigerator and took out a bottle of Dom Pérignon, or "Dom," as Jackie and Irving always called it. Except for a can of dog food and a jar of cocktail capers, the refrigerator was empty. Clearly, the Mansfields were not home-bodies. She handed me the bottle and said, "Pop it, kid."

Just as we were toasting each other, the door opened and Irving came in, with Josephine on a leash. Mansfield prided himself on being a tough guy, though all he was, actually, was Jackie's spokesman: she was the tough one, not her husband. His ambition in life was to be a Broadway "character," and he had mastered the gruff voice, the sharp clothes, the "Don't fuck with me" stare, and the shameless chutzpah of that vanishing breed. Yet he never quite carried it off. In some indefinable way, he always looked like a small-timer, though he was deeply suspicious that he was being taken for one.

"Did Josie do her business, honey?" Jackie asked, with genuine concern.

"Yeah, yeah," Irving said, with the look of a man who hadn't noticed. He put Josephine in the bedroom and came back and poured himself a glass of Dom. "So what do you think of Jackie?" he asked. "Isn't she great?"

As we were soon to discover, this was Irving's refrain. After everything Jackie said or did, Irving would chuckle and say, "Isn't she great?"

Great or not, Jackie was a pro, just as Irving had promised. The pink paper, for example, was not a whim. She typed each draft of her manuscript on paper of a different color; pink was for her first, rough draft. She clearly understood what her strengths were. "I write for women who read me in the goddam subways on the way home from work," she explained. "I know who they are, because that's who I used to be. They want to press their noses against the windows of other people's houses and get a look at the parties they'll never be invited to, the dresses they'll never get to wear, the lives they'll never live, the guys they'll never fuck." Jackie exhaled cigarette smoke through both nostrils like a dragon, and went on, "But here's the catch. All the people they envy in my books, the ones who are glamorous, or beautiful, or rich, or talented—they have to suffer, see, because that way the people who read me can get off the subway and go home feeling better about their own crappy lives, and luckier than the people they've been reading about."

"Isn't she great?" Irving said, with his chuckle.

In fact, I decided, in her own way Jackie *was* great. She understood exactly what she was doing. In those days, when the TV industry seemed glamorous, she had elected to write a novel about television—to this day the only successful one, and the best. "The Love Machine" not only referred to Robin Stone, the fabulously successful television executive who was the book's hero, but was also Robin Stone's name for the television set itself. Jackie could see that the television set was like a lover, always waiting in the bedroom, available twenty-four hours a day, establishing a new kind of intimacy with the public. She didn't need Marshall McLuhan to teach her this, and her grasp of it was one of the reasons she herself was such a good promoter on television: she was, as she put it, "a natural on the boob tube."

Jackie also turned out to be a phenomenally hard worker, who took suggestions calmly, provided they were not directed at her view of life or of herself. That afternoon, she absorbed our notes, threw out the ones she disagreed with, and, without any display of prima-donna temperament, carved out, with our help, a plot and structure that sounded pretty damned good and, with any luck, might even sound O.K. the next morning. I was impressed and relieved.

I asked Jackie if she thought she could meet our deadline. She looked at me through narrowed eyes. "You bet your fucking ass," she said.

"HEH, heh," Irving laughed. "What did I tell you? Isn't she great?" Did we know that Jackie could also sing? We shook our heads. He produced a tape, and we sat listening to Jackie singing "The Tender Trap" in a flat, harsh, tuneless baritone. It was apparently her theme song. We heard it twice, awestruck, while Irving kept time with his right hand. Later on, people told me that Irving used Jackie, but I knew better. No man ever loved a woman more than Irving loved Jackie. Only love could explain why he was willing to listen to that tape for the umpteenth time with unfeigned pleasure.

"Am I right or am I wrong? Isn't she great?" he asked. He gave us each a copy of the recording as a souvenir, and said, "Let's go eat."

Dolger pleaded another engagement, and went home with the manuscript, his notes, and his tape, but the Mansfields were not about to let me escape that easily. I was to have dinner with them—they would hear of nothing else—because otherwise Jackie's feelings would be hurt. Abby Hirsch emerged from the bedroom, where she had presumably been babysitting Josephine, and booked a table for us at Danny's Hide-A-Way.

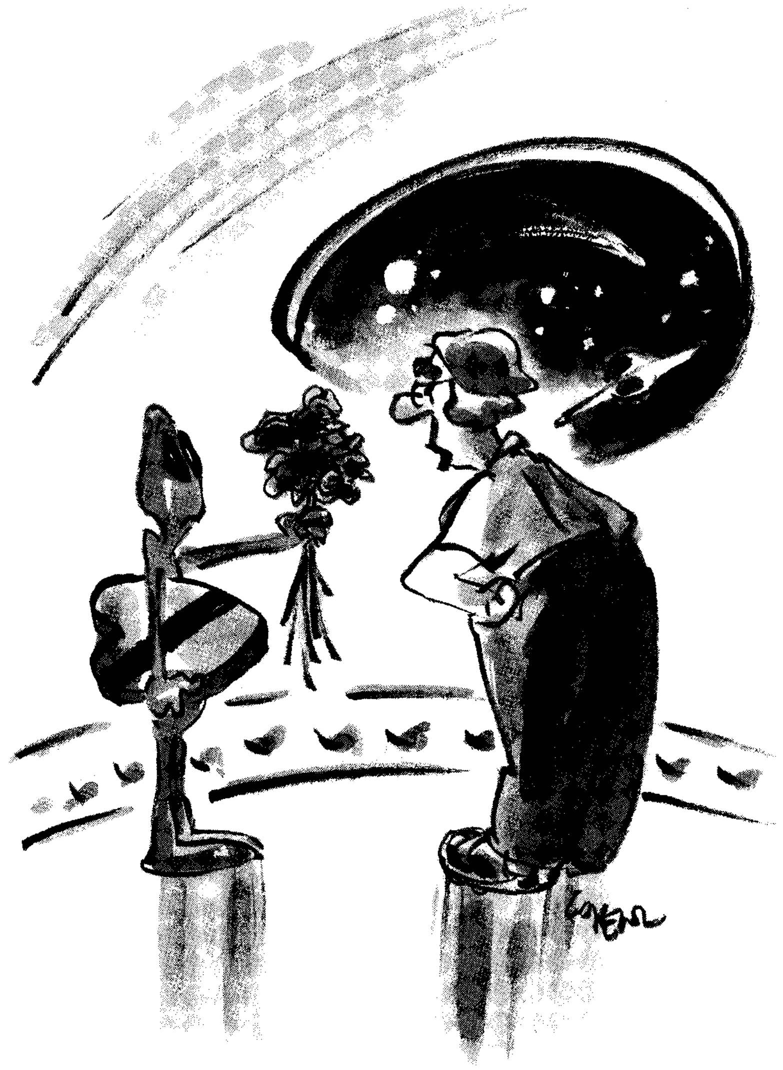
Before we went to dinner, however, Jackie decided to change my appearance. I was wearing an old tweed hacking jacket with suède patches on the elbows. Jackie looked at me critically, then said, "You're a big-shot editor, but you dress like a bum." Never mind, she would rectify that. Irving Mansfield was wearing a brand-new dark-blue cashmere blazer, cut in the Hollywood style, with dramatic wide lapels, and gold buttons engraved with an ankh. (As I soon learned, the ankh, an ancient Egyptian symbol for life, was Jackie's latest gimmick. It eventually turned out to play a major role in the plot of "The Love Machine," and Simon & Schuster would tie into it by having ankh pendants on gold chains made for important lady booksellers and ankh rings for men, and golden ankhs stamped on everything else in sight. In time, we came to refer to the ankh as "the ancient Egyptian symbol for schlock," but never within Jackie's hearing. She took the ankh seriously.)

"Give him your blazer, honey," Jackie told Irving. For once, Irving balked: the blazer had just arrived from his tailor that morning, he was devoted to it, and it had 18k.-gold buttons. But to no avail. Over his protests and mine—the last thing I wanted was to wear Irving's new blazer—he was forced to relinquish it. As I tried it on, I noticed that the lining, too, was embroidered with ankhs. The Mansfields had already sold the film rights to "The Love Machine," and I wondered in whose promotional budget the cost of Irving's blazer had been buried—the movie company's or ours. Unfortunately, Irving was much bigger around the waist than I was and had longer arms. I surveyed myself in Jackie's mirror, draped in folds of blue cashmere. I pointed out that it didn't fit, and Irving, who was desperate now, concurred.

Jackie was not to be swayed. "It fits fine," she said. "It looks great on you, doll. Maybe you should get the sleeves shortened a bit, but it'll do fine for tonight." I protested that I couldn't take it from Irving. "He wants you to have it," Jackie said firmly.

And poor Irving, tears in his eyes, said, without the chuckle, "Isn't she great?"

Danny's Hide-A-Way proved to be one of those dark New York steak boîtes that cater to celebrities. By the time we sat down to dinner, our party included the comedian Myron Cohen, the actor Peter Lawford, and Lawford's date, a stunningly beautiful young woman. Lawford was drunk, and seemed to have been captured by the Mansfields without knowing who they were. At times, he slept noisily, his face on the table. Awake,



"Very nice, but I understood there were to be bizarre sexual experiments."

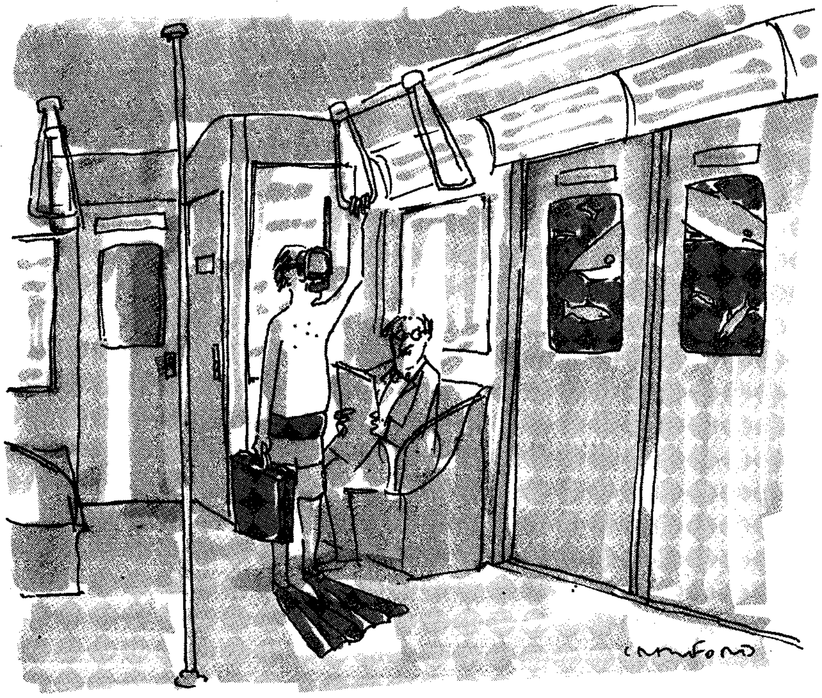
he was rude and hostile. One minute he was quarrelling with his girl, and the next minute he was putting his hand under her dress or sticking his tongue in her ear while she feebly tried to fend him off. "I could use a piece of that," Cohen said wistfully.

By now, it was well past ten o'clock, and I was starved, but every time the maître d' came over, bearing red flock, gold-tasselled velvet menus the size of doors, Jackie shooed him away and ordered another round of drinks. Finally Jackie allowed us to have menus. I didn't even look at mine. I ordered a steak and a baked potato, and prayed for its swift arrival. In the meantime, Irving had been regaling whoever was listening with the story of his shoes. He had gone to his shoemaker in Beverly Hills and ordered a pair of loafers in alligator hide, he said, and they were the most expensive shoes he had ever owned. Cohen asked how much they had cost. Two hundred and fifty bucks, Irving replied. Cohen shook his head. He was wearing a pair of shoes that cost more than that, he said. They'd been made for him in Vegas from the hide of newborn Cuban caiman. He took one off and passed it to Irving, and Irving examined it with envy and then passed it around the table. Lawford, when the shoe got to him, glanced at it with contempt, took off one of his shoes, and banged it on the table. "Unborn baby turtle," he said. "Five hundred dollars a pair, and worth every penny. You don't even know you have shoes on, they're so comfortable." Cohen looked as wistfully at Lawford's shoe as he had earlier looked at the actor's girl. He and Irving were carefully writing down the name of Lawford's shoemaker as the food was served.

I picked up my knife and fork and prepared to eat my steak, but Jackie noticed what I had ordered and was upset. I could get a steak any fucking where, she declared. Danny's was famous for its Lobster Fra Diavolo, which she had ordered, and its Calf's Liver Veneziana, which Irving had ordered. I could not eat at Danny's without giving them a try. She took a big spoonful of her lobster and dumped it on top of my steak, then piled some of Irving's calf's liver on top of that.

I decided to go home and raid the refrigerator, and made my goodbyes, pleading work to be done, my wife's health, a sick child, a headache. Luckily, this time neither Jackie nor Irving tried to stop me. But, as I was collecting my briefcase from the hat-check girl, the maître d' came running after me. I was afraid that Jackie was demanding my return. Instead, the maître d' handed me the check. "Mr. Mansfield says you're the publisher, so you're paying," he said.

I glanced at the bill. It was the largest restaurant check I had ever seen. I signed it boldly, added an enormous tip, and told him to send it over to Simon & Schuster.



As publication day approached, show business swept into the S. & S. promotion and publicity departments. In the old days, a cocktail party at the Schusters' apartment and a spot on the "Today" show had sufficed for a book's publication, but now we were orchestrating huge publication parties on both coasts, and sending out gift ankhs in plush-lined leatherette presentation cases shaped like books (which were accompanied by a personal note from Jackie on special "Love Machine" stationery). Plans were made on a scale exceeding even that of the campaign for "Valley of the Dolls": displays, posters, promotional material for the sales force, cakes in the shape of a book with the cover reproduced in icing, a lavish publication party for hundreds at the American Booksellers Association convention, in Washington, D.C. (The booksellers would be served a "Love Machine" cocktail invented for the occasion by the bartender at Danny's Hide-A-Way, and would be entertained with Tony Bennett's live performance of the theme song for "The Love Machine," with lyrics by Sammy Cahn.) For the first time in Simon & Schuster's experience, the author's photograph seemed to be as important as the contents of the book, and vast sums were spent on photographers and, inevitably, retouchers. I wasn't concerned with much of this, because I was busy transforming Jackie's typescript and scrawled revisions into prose or else engaging in a daily "story conference" to work out the plot, but soon I was thrust into the role of S. & S.'s ambassador-at-large to the Mansfields, since almost from the start both Jackie and Irving had quarrelled violently with Dick Snyder, whose role in the enterprise was to say no to the Mansfields' more extreme demands. "No" was not a word that Jackie was accustomed to hearing. "You go back and tell Snyder that this is a deal-breaker," I heard several times a day.

Of course, plans for the cakes had to be placed on hold until we had a dust jacket for the bakers to copy, and getting the dust jacket was no easy task. The Mansfields had cover approval written into their contract, and took it seriously: "packaging," a word they were fond of, but one that had not yet come into widespread use among book publishers, mattered a lot to them. They sent every jacket suggestion to Hollywood, where there were, as they put it, "people who really knew packaging"—pros at the game, not amateurs like us. After much argument and angst, a design was agreed upon. The novel would resemble a movie poster (surprise!), and would feature a man's hand grasping a woman's, with the man's wearing (what else?) a gold ankh ring. Irving ordered us to get the best hand models in New York for the shot, and we did. When Jackie saw the proof, though, she didn't like it. We explained that we had hired the best hand models in New York. Jackie didn't miss a beat. "Get me the two *second*-best hand models in New York," she snapped. And we did.

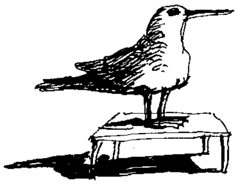
"I WANT the name of the girl who put me on hold," Jackie screeched at me over the phone one day. "I want her fired! Nobody puts Jacqueline Susann on hold!"

It was not just being put on hold that made her angry; she didn't like being told that someone she had called was unavailable, or in a meeting, or out to lunch, and God help the assistant who didn't know the answer to any question she might ask, even if it wasn't the assistant's job to know the answer. When Jackie was angry, her voice was like a buzz saw at full throttle. She was always asking that someone be fired, and we found that the simplest way of handling the problem was to tell her that the employee had been, and then move the employee out of sight.

When Jackie decided that someone had crossed her, she never forgot it. During the planning of the "Love Machine" publication parties, Jackie told Dan Green, then the publicity director at Simon & Schuster, that no "cripples" were to be invited. I probed for an explanation. I discovered that Jackie apparently had nothing against the disabled but simply felt that their presence depressed people and was therefore counterproductive to good promotion. Green joked that he wasn't about to turn one of her parties into a scene from the Cour des Miracles as Victor Hugo had described it in "The Hunchback of Notre-Dame." Jackie was not amused. "I don't care what they do in Paris," she snapped, staring at Green suspiciously. Jackie had a sense of humor, but not about herself, and she suspected that Green was having fun at her expense. "No cripples," she said firmly. "You heard me."

We put this down to a harmless eccentricity on her part, but, as usual, she meant business. When, toward the end of the New York party, a distinguished elderly publishing figure arrived late, on crutches—he had broken a leg—Jackie flung herself at Dan Green in a fury. Pointing a long red nail at the hobbled guest, she whispered, "Get him out of here!" Then she grabbed Green's tie as if to strangle him. "I told you, you son of a bitch! No cripples at my party!"

Years later, I ran into Jackie, and we chatted briefly about old times. I mentioned Dan Green's name, and her eyes blazed. "He's the one who tried to ruin the party for 'The Love Machine,' " she said vehemently. "He invited a cripple just to spoil the mood."



TO an outsider, one curious thing about Jackie was that she and Irving seemed to have no private life. The Mansfields seemed to be entirely wrapped up in keeping Jackie famous. They were always on the telephone, Jackie selling her book, Irving making deals.

But Jackie did have a private life, and her success was, in one sense, a way of concealing it and, in another sense, a way of escaping from the pain of it. The secret was that in 1962 it had been discovered that Jackie had breast cancer. A mastectomy had failed to halt the spread of the disease, and Jackie spent the rest of her life on painkillers, struggling with a burden she refused to share with the outside world. Perhaps more terrible still, the Mansfields' twenty-two-year-old son, Guy, was autistic, and she and Irving also managed to conceal that fact from the world at large.

These circumstances may perhaps explain the feeling I had that the Mansfields' life together was itself a kind of fiction. To be with them was to suspect both that these two people existed only for the outside world and that what they showed the outside was all an illusion. But Jackie and Irving were living through a tragedy as sensational as any in her books, and putting on a show to cover it.

"Jackie is a trouper," Irving told me once, when she made a talk-show appearance while suffering from laryngitis, but the statement was far truer than he or Jackie ever let on. She was a woman of her time, who believed not only that the show must go on but that the public wanted to see celebrities with happy faces, whatever might be happening in their private lives. Today, of course, the public expects to hear the most intimate details of private lives, and a celebrity coping with cancer or an autistic child would be in great demand. But Jackie lived in fear that her public would find out that she wasn't simply rich, happy, and successful. "I hear he's got cancer," I once heard Irving say about someone in show business. He added, without irony, "When they hear about that in Hollywood, he's dead."

THE "launch"—the word was new to publishing—of "The Love Machine" took place in the early spring of 1969, and was accompanied by incredible ballyhoo. The Mansfields might have their comic side, but when they moved into high gear what they achieved was impressive to behold. Jackie, after all, virtually invented the idea of establishing a deep, personal connection between an author and the people who actually sold books. Bookstore managers and clerks had long been ignored by publishers and authors. A visiting author might shake hands while his publisher's sales rep whispered names in his ear ("That's Angela, and the one with the thick glasses and the pens in his shirt pocket is Ted"), but that was about it. Jackie had been around stars long enough to know that that wasn't enough. If these people were going to sell her book, she loved them, and she would make them love her. Not only did she remember their names without coaching but she had a huge Rolodex, lovingly kept up to date by Abby Hirsch, that contained the birthday of each one and the name of his or her mother, or husband, or cat. On a birthday and at Christmas each received an affectionate personal note, handwritten by Jackie. And as each new book was published they received signed advance copies, gift-wrapped and boxed, each with a personal message.

What she was doing, of course, was reaching out to the booksellers directly, making them part of her team. In fact, she was not above mobilizing the booksellers against her own publisher: she would urge them to lobby for a bigger printing, a lower retail price, more ads, or further printings. She brought grass-roots marketing to the formerly staid business of selling a book. In some ways, that was a more significant contribution to the world of publishing than the dazzle and the hype.

Perhaps the most memorable event of the whole "Love Machine" campaign was the party at the A.B.A. convention. The evening had been carefully designed by the Mansfields to capitalize on the affection that the booksellers felt—or were purported to feel—for Jackie. Dinner was to be served at intimate candlelit tables for ten in the big ballroom of the Shoreham Hotel, and each table was to have one empty chair, so that Jackie could move from table to table throughout the meal. The lighting was kept low, the orchestra played romantic music, and the arriving booksellers filed past Jackie and Irving in the receiving line, where Jackie displayed her phenomenal memory, greeting each of them by name, not to mention the name of each one's dog and cat.

Upon leaving the receiving line, each bookseller was served a "Love Machine" cocktail, which turned out to be a potent, sweet concoction involving, among other things, crème de cacao, Pernod, vodka, crushed ice, and fresh fruit, served in a big tumbler. It was predictably lethal. Very shortly, we had several hundred booksellers in various stages of inebriation, and the noise level was rising. Dan Green, with the haunted look of a royal functionary surveying an uncontrollable mob in the castle courtyard, slipped up beside me and whispered, "What are we going to do?"

"Serve dinner?" I suggested.

Green nodded. We had the lights dimmed and brightened to signal that it was dinnertime. Nobody paid any attention. We finally persuaded the waiters to start serving, and gradually—with many falls, bumps, and crashes of tipped-over chairs—the guests started to sit down.

Jackie was furious. She had envisioned a kind of White House state dinner, with her as First Lady, and with her book as the center of attention. (There were copies on each table—with pens, so that she could sign them.) A drunken brawl was not what she had in mind.

The menu had been chosen, perhaps mistakenly, with flamboyance in mind, and included a lot of flambé dishes, which Jackie liked because of their drama. Great bursts of flame lit up the room—occasionally accompanied by the smell of singed hair—illuminating, as in Hell, Jackie, as she made her way from table to table. Booksellers were turning the promotional material into paper airplanes and sending them flying through the room. Amaretti di Saronno, small, round Italian biscuits wrapped in tissue-thin paper, had been placed on each table, and people were setting fire to the wrappers to watch them float slowly in flames to the ceiling. Jackie could be seen smiling fiercely, in ill-disguised terror, as she attempted to shield her wig from the flames.

At last, the meal dragged to an end. There was a rousing fanfare. The lighting dropped from dim to dark. While a hired singer—Tony Bennett had apparently declined—sang the "Love Machine" theme, four waiters descended a flight of stairs bearing a spotlighted cake in the shape of a giant book, its icing resembling the "Love Machine" jacket. The whole room rose to applaud as the cake moved slowly toward Jackie, but just before it reached her a bystander, overcome by one too many Love Machine cocktails, slipped and fell into the cake.

One look at Jackie's face was enough to tell me the right thing to do. I went back to my hotel room and told the operator not to put any calls through. The next morning, I got up at dawn and took the train to New York.

STILL, I remained friendly with Jackie; and she fell out with everyone else at Simon & Schuster until she had nobody but me to talk to. "The Love Machine" was published on May 14, 1969, went to No. 1 on the *Times* best-seller list, and stayed in the top ten for more than six months. After Jackie finished her book tour, she and Irving invited me to dinner at Danny's Hide-A-Way again, to say goodbye, and they left for Los Angeles the next morning to work on the screenplay for "The Love Machine."

Not long afterward, Jackie left Simon & Schuster, and her next, and final, book, "Once Is Not Enough," was published, in 1973, by William Morrow. (Dick Snyder sent her a single rose on the publication day, with a note that read, "For us, once *was* enough.") Meanwhile, I occasionally met Irving Mansfield on the street—outside "21," or on Central Park South—as he waited for Josephine to do her business.

Then, one night, the telephone rang at some ungodly hour. My wife picked it up, listened for a moment, and, holding her hand over the mouthpiece, said, "There's a drunken woman on the phone asking for you."

Half asleep, I took the phone. I recognized Jackie's voice at once. She wasn't drunk but distraught with grief. "I just wanted you to know," she said haltingly. "Josephine is dead."

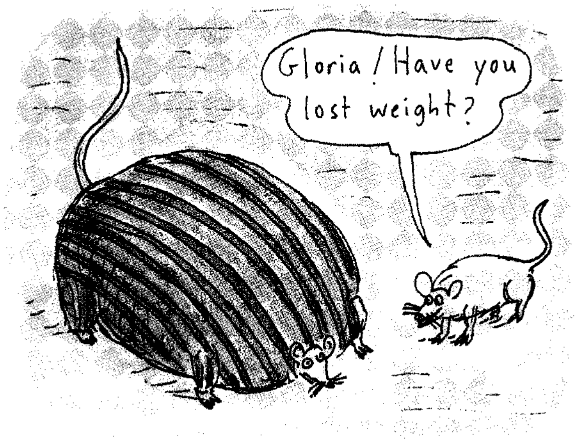
For some strange reason, I felt sad, even though I had never known Josephine in her prime, when Jackie made her the most famous poodle in America. In the old days, Josephine, not Jackie, had been the star, and had gone everywhere with her owners—to restaurants, night clubs, talk shows. Then, as Jackie herself became the star, Josephine was eclipsed, left behind—loved, perhaps, but no longer in the limelight. With her death, it was as if a chapter of what Jackie liked to call "the book of life" had come to an end. I couldn't have guessed that Jackie's own life would end so soon afterward, in 1974.

Jackie and Irving taught me that books can be merchandised, just like anything else—something that a lot of publishers have yet to learn. Today, she is a prophet without honor, but John Grisham, Robert James Waller, Judith Krantz, Jackie Collins, Danielle Steel, and the rest all owe her a debt. Jackie reinvented that mainstay of publishing the romance novel, and opened it up to a franker sexuality and a tougher kind of story—to romance with tears *and* oral sex, to heroes with good looks and icy hearts. She introduced readers to a raw new sensationalism, and initiated the kind of celebrity worship that blossomed into the full-scale celebrity cult of the eighties and nineties. More important, she taught everybody in book publishing that what many people want to read more than anything else is, quite simply, a good story—that the rags-to-riches saga, the tale of poor little Miss Nobody in love with her all-powerful boss, and the fantasy of the understudy who gets her chance to strut the stage and becomes a star are not just clichés but enable readers to escape their own lives and troubles by reading about other people's lives and troubles. She knew that better than anyone before or since.

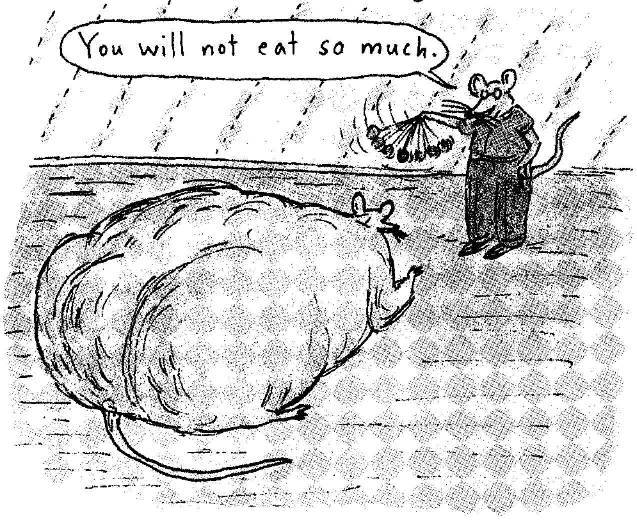
She once predicted that the sixties would be remembered for Andy Warhol, the Beatles, and Jackie Susann, but, alas, she was wrong. It's nearly impossible to find a copy of any of her books in New York—a fate that would have been sadder for Jackie than anything else, even Josie's death, perhaps even her own. She had always counted on her books for immortality, and, in the end, they failed her. ♦

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS for FAT MICE

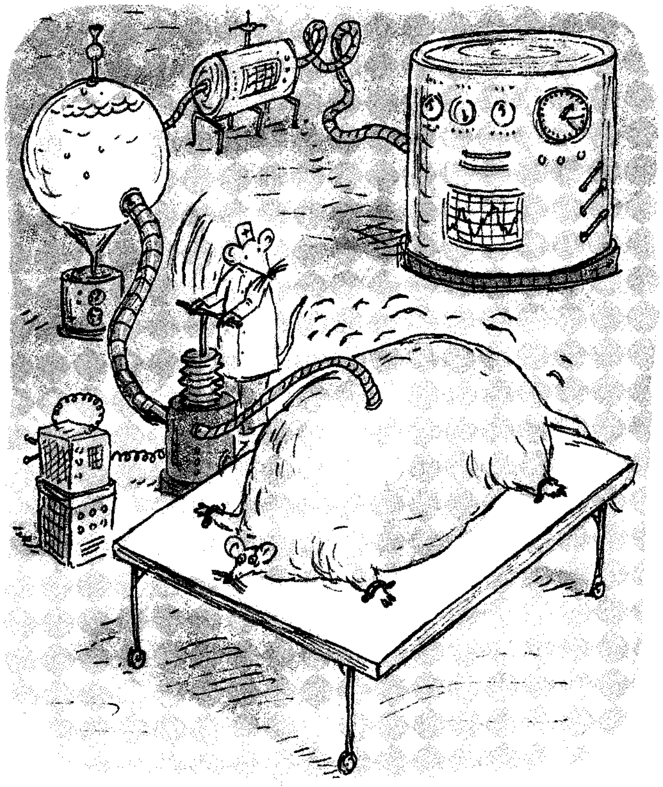
Many mice have simply changed their wardrobes.


Gloria! Have you lost weight?

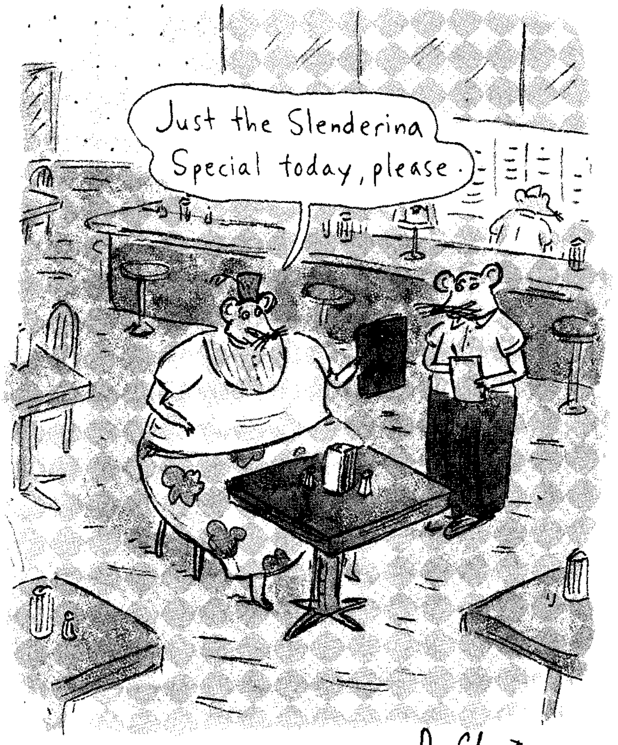
Some have found hypnosis to be a helpful dieting aid.


You will not eat so much.

For others, liposuction is the only way to shed unwanted pounds.



For a long-term solution, however, most will have to revamp their life styles.


Just the Slenderina Special today, please.

R. Chast

FICTION

SOUNDS

This is one of Nabokov's earliest stories and is among those he collected before his death for a final volume. Dmitri Nabokov, the author's son and translator, believes that it is in part autobiographical; he recently visited its setting, the family estates outside St. Petersburg, and found much of the landscape unchanged.

BY VLADIMIR NABOKOV

IT was necessary to shut the window: rain was striking the sill and splashing the parquet and armchairs. With a fresh, slippery sound, enormous silver spectres sped through the garden, through the foliage, along the orange sand. The drainpipe rattled and choked. You were playing Bach. The piano had raised its lacquered wing; under the wing lay a lyre, and little hammers were rippling across the strings. The brocade rug, crumpling into coarse folds, had slid partway off the piano's tail, dropping an opened opus onto the floor. Every now and then, through the frenzy of the fugue, your ring would clink on the keys as, incessantly, magnificently, the June shower slashed the windowpanes. And you, without interrupting your playing, and slightly tilting your head, were exclaiming, in time to the beat, "The rain, the rain . . . I am go-ing to drown it out. . . ."

But you could not.

Abandoning the albums that lay on the table like velvet coffins, I watched you and listened to the fugue, the rain. A feeling of freshness welled in me like the fragrance of wet carnations that trickled down everywhere, from the shelves, from the piano's wing, from the oblong diamonds of the chandelier.

I had a feeling of enraptured equilibrium as I sensed the musical relationship between the silvery spectres of rain and your inclined shoulders, which would give a shudder when you pressed your fingers into the rippling lustre. And when I withdrew deep into myself the whole world seemed like that—homogeneous, congruent, bound by the laws of harmony. I myself, you, the carnations—at that instant all became vertical chords on musical staves. I realized that everything in the world was an interplay of identical particles comprising different kinds of consonance: the trees, the water, you. . . . All was unified, equivalent, divine. You got up. Rain was still mowing down the sunlight. The puddles looked like holes in the dark sand, apertures onto some other heavens that were gliding past underground. On a bench, glistening like Danish china, lay your forgotten racquet; the strings had turned brown from the rain, and the frame had twisted into a figure eight.

When we entered the lane, I felt a bit giddy from the motley of shadows and the aroma of mushroom rot.

I recall you within a chance patch of sunlight. You had sharp elbows and pale, dusty-looking eyes. When you spoke, you would carve the air with the riblike edge of your little hand and the glint of a bracelet on your thin wrist. Your hair would melt as it merged with the sunlit air that quivered around it. You smoked copiously and nervously. You exhaled through both nostrils, obliquely flicking off the ash. Your dove-gray manor was five versts from ours. Its interior was reverberant, sumptuous, and cool. A photograph of it had appeared in a glossy metropolitan magazine. Almost every morning, I would leap onto the leather wedge of my bicycle and rustle along the path, through the woods, then along the highway and through the village, then along another path toward you. You counted on your husband's not coming in September. And we feared nothing, you and I—not your servants' gossip, not my family's suspicions. Each of us, in a different way, trusted fate.

YOUR love was a bit muted, as was your voice. One might say you loved askance, and you never spoke about love. You were one of those habitually untalkative women, to whose silence one immediately grows accustomed. But now and then something in you burst forth. Then your giant Bechstein would thunder, or else, gazing mistily straight ahead, you would tell me hilarious anecdotes you had heard from your husband or from his regimental comrades. I remember your hands—elongated, pale hands with bluish veins.

ON that happy day when the rain was lashing and you played so unexpectedly well came the resolution of the nebulous something that had imperceptibly arisen between us after our first weeks of love. I realized that you had no power over me, that it was not you alone who were my lover but the entire earth. It was as if my soul had extended countless sensitive feelers, and I lived within everything, perceiving simultaneously Niagara Falls thundering far beyond the ocean and the long golden drops rustling and pattering in the lane. I glanced at a birch tree's shiny bark and suddenly felt that, in place of arms, I possessed inclined branches covered with little wet leaves and, instead of legs, a thousand slender roots, twining into the earth, imbibing it. I wanted to transfuse myself thus into all of nature, to experience what it was like to be an old boletus mushroom with its spongy yellow underside, or a dragonfly, or the solar sphere. I felt so happy that I suddenly burst out laughing, and kissed you on the clavicle and nape. I would even have recited a poem to you, but you detested poetry.

You smiled a thin smile and said, "It's nice after the rain." Then you thought for a minute and added, "You know, I just remembered—I've been invited to tea today at . . . what's his name . . . Pal Palych's. He's a real bore. But, you know, I must go."

Pal Palych was an old acquaintance of mine. We would be fishing together and, all of a sudden, in a creaky little tenor, he would break into "The Evening Bells." I was very fond of him. A fiery drop fell from a leaf right onto my lips. I offered to accompany you.

You gave a shivery shrug. "We'll be bored to death there. This is awful." You glanced at your wrist and sighed. "Time to go. I must change my shoes."

In your misty bedroom, the sunlight, having penetrated the lowered Venetian blinds, formed two golden ladders on the floor. You said something in your muted voice. Outside the window, the trees breathed and dripped with a contented rustle. And I, smiling at that rustle, lightly and unavidly embraced you.

Nabokov in 1920. He was twenty-four when he wrote "Sounds."

It happened like this. On one bank of the river was your park, your meadows, and on the other stood the village. The highway was deeply rutted in places. The mud was a lush violet, and the grooves contained bubbly, café-au-lait water. The oblique shadows of black log izbas extended with particular clarity.

We walked in the shade along a well-trodden path, past a grocery, past an inn with an emerald sign, past sun-filled courtyards emanating the aromas of manure and of fresh hay.

The schoolhouse was new, constructed of stone, with maples planted around it. On its threshold a peasant woman's white calves gleamed as she wrung out a rag into a bucket.

You inquired, "Is Pal Palych in?" The woman, with her freckles and braids, squinted against the sun. "He is, he is." The pail tinkled as she pushed it with her heel. "Come in, ma'am. They'll be in the workshop."

We creaked along a dark hallway, then through a spacious classroom. I glanced in passing at an azure map, and thought, That's how all of Russia is—sunlight and hollows. . . . In a corner sparkled a crushed piece of chalk.

Farther on, in the small workshop, there was a pleasant smell of carpenter's glue and pine sawdust. Coatless, puffy, and sweaty, his left leg extended, Pal Palych was planing away appetizingly at a groaning white board. His moist, bald pate rocked to and fro in a dusty ray of sunlight. On the floor under the workbench, the shavings curled like flimsy locks.

I said loudly, "Pal Palych, you have guests!"

He gave a start, immediately got flustered, bestowed a polite smack on the hand you raised with such a listless, familiar gesture, and for an instant poured his damp fingers into my hand and gave it a shake. His face looked as if it had been fashioned of buttery modelling clay, with its limp mustache and unexpected furrows.

"Sorry—I'm not dressed, you see," he said with a guilty smile. He grabbed a pair of shirt cuffs that had been standing like cylinders side by side on the windowsill, and pulled them on hastily.

"What are you working on?" you asked with a glint of your bracelet. Pal Palych was struggling into his jacket with sweeping motions. "Nothing, just puttering," he sputtered, stumbling slightly on the labial consonants. "It's a kind of little shelf. Haven't finished yet. I still have to sand and lacquer it. But take a look at this—I call it the Fly. . . ." With a spinning rub of his joined palms, he launched a miniature wooden helicopter, which soared with a buzzing sound, bumped on the ceiling, and dropped.

The shadow of a polite smile flitted across your face. "Oh, silly me," Pal Palych started again. "You were expected upstairs, my friends. . . . This door squeaks. Sorry. Allow me to go first. I'm afraid my place is a mess. . . ."

"I think he forgot he invited me," you said in English as we began climbing the creaky staircase.

I was watching your back, the silk checks of your blouse. From somewhere downstairs, probably the courtyard, came a resonant peasant-woman voice: "Gerosim! Hey, Gerosim!" And suddenly it was supremely clear to me that, for centuries, the world had been blooming, withering, spinning, changing solely in order that now, at this instant, it might combine and fuse into a vertical chord the voice that had resounded downstairs, the motion of your silken shoulder blades, and the scent of pine boards.

Pal Palych's room was sunny and somewhat cramped. A crimson rug with a yellow lion embroidered in its center was nailed to the wall above the bed. On another wall hung a framed chapter from "Anna Karenin," set in such a way that the interplay of dark and light type together with the clever placement of the lines formed Tolstoy's face.

Rubbing his hands together, our host seated you. As he did so, he knocked an album off the table with the flap of his jacket. He retrieved it. Tea, yogurt, and some insipid biscuits appeared. From a dresser drawer, Pal Palych produced a flowery tin of Landrin hard candy. When he stooped, a fold of pimply skin bulged behind his collar. The down of a spiderweb on the windowsill contained a yellow, dead bumblebee. "Where is Sarajevo?" you asked suddenly, rustling a newspaper page that you had listlessly picked up from a chair. Pal Palych, busy pouring tea, replied, "In Serbia."

And, with a trembling hand, he carefully gave you the steaming glass in its silver stand.

"There you are. May I offer you some biscuits? . . . And what are they throwing bombs for?" He addressed me with a jerk of his shoulders.

I was examining, for the hundredth time, a massive glass paperweight. The glass contained pinkish azure and St. Isaac's Cathedral specked with golden sandy grains. You laughed and read aloud, "Yesterday, a merchant of the Second Guild named Yeroshin was arrested at the Quisisana Restaurant. It turned out that Yeroshin, under the pretext of . . ." You laughed again. "No, the rest is indecent."

Pal Palych grew flustered, flushed a brownish shade of red, and dropped his spoon. Maple leaves glistened immediately beneath the windows. A wagon rattled past. From somewhere came the plaintive, tender cry "Ice—cream! . . ."

He began talking about school, about drunkenness, about the trout that had appeared in the river. I started scrutinizing him, and had the feeling I was really seeing him for the first time, even though we were old acquaintances. An image of him from our first encounter must have remained impressed on my brain and never changed, like something accepted and grown habitual. When thinking in passing about Pal Palych, I had the impression for some reason that he had not only a dark-blond mustache but even a matching little beard. An imaginary beard is a characteristic of many Russian faces. Now, having given him a special look, so to speak, with an internal eye, I saw that in reality his chin was rounded, hairless, and had a slight cleft. He had a fleshy nose, and I noticed, on his left eyelid, a pimplelike mole I would have dearly loved to cut off—but cutting would have meant killing. That little grain contained him, totally and exclusively. When I realized all this, and examined all of him, I made the slightest of motions, as if nudging my soul to start it sliding downhill, and glided inside Pal Palych, made myself comfortable inside him, and felt from within, as it were, that growth on his wrinkly eyelid, the starched winglets of his collar, and the fly crawling across his bald spot. I examined all of him with limpid, mobile eyes. The yellow lion over the bed now seemed an old acquaintance, as if it had been on my wall since childhood. The colored postcard, enclosed in its convex glass, became extraordinary, graceful, joyous. It was not you sitting in front of me, in the low wicker armchair to which my back had grown accustomed, but the benefactress of the school, a taciturn lady I hardly knew. And right away, with the same lightness of movement, I glided into you, too, perceived the ribbon of a garter above your knee, and, a little higher, the tickle of batiste, and thought, in your stead, that it was boring, it was hot, one wanted to smoke. At that instant you produced a gold case from your purse and inserted a cigarette into your holder. And I was within everything—you, the cigarette, the holder, Pal Palych scrabbling awkwardly with his match, the glass paperweight, the dead bumblebee on the windowsill.

Many years have sailed by, and I do not know where he is now, timid, puffy Pal Palych. Sometimes, though, when he is the last thing I am thinking about, I see him in a dream, transposed into the setting of my current existence. He enters a room with his fussy, smiling gait, faded panama in hand; he bows as he walks; he mops his bald spot and ruddy neck with an enormous handkerchief. And when I dream of him you invariably traverse my dream, looking lazy and wearing a low-belted silk top.

I was not loquacious on that wonderfully happy day. I gulped the slippery flakes of curds and strained to hear every sound. When Pal Palych fell silent, I could hear his stomach muttering—a delicate squeak, followed by a tiny gurgle. Whereupon he would demonstratively clear his throat and hurriedly start talking about something. Stumbling, at a loss for the right word, he would frown and drum his fingertips on the table. You reclined in the low armchair, impassive and silent. Turning your head sidewise and lifting your angular elbow, you would glance at me from under your lashes as you adjusted the hairpins in back. You thought I felt awkward in front of Pal Palych because you and I had arrived together, and he might have an inkling about our relationship. And I was amused that you were thinking this, and amused by the dim, melancholy way Pal Palych blushed when you deliberately mentioned your husband and his work.

In front of the school, the sun's hot ochre had splashed beneath the maples. From the threshold, Pal Palych bowed, thanking us for dropping by, then he bowed again from the doorway, and a thermometer sparkled, glassy-white, on the outside wall.

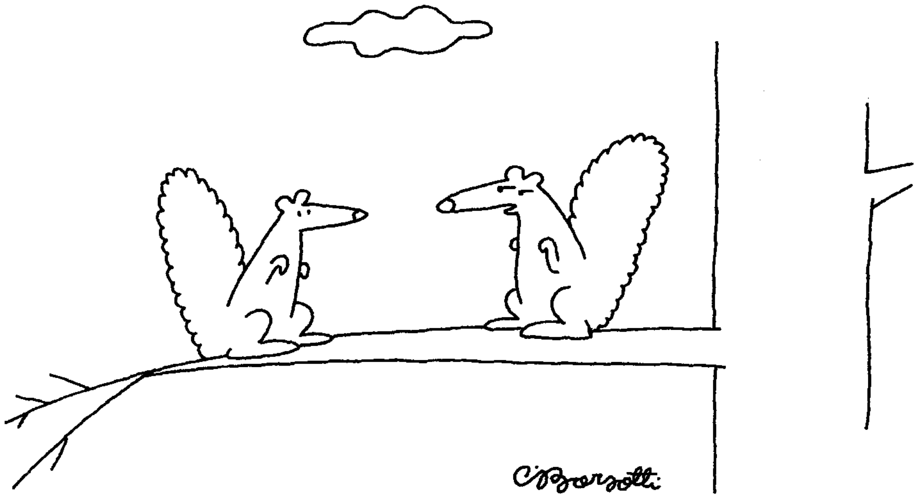
When we had left the village, crossed the bridge, and were climbing the path toward your house, I took you under the elbow, and you flashed that special sidelong smile that told me you were happy. Suddenly I had the desire to tell you about Pal Palych's little wrinkles, about the spangled St. Isaac's, but, as soon as I began, I had a feeling the wrong words were coming out, bizarre words, and when you tenderly said, "Decadent," I changed the subject. I knew what you needed: simple feelings, simple words. Your silence was effortless and windless, like the silence of clouds or plants. All silence is the recognition of a mystery. There was much about you that seemed mysterious.

A workman in a puffed blouse was resonantly and firmly sharpening his scythe. Butterflies floated above the unmowed scabious flowers. Toward us along the path came a young girl with a pale-green kerchief on her shoulders and daisies in her dark hair. I had already seen her three times or so, and her thin, tanned neck had stuck in my memory. As she passed, she gave you an attentive touch of her barely slanted eyes. Then, hopping carefully across the ditch, she disappeared behind the alders. A silvery tremor traversed the matte-textured bushes. You said, "I bet she was having herself a nice walk in my park. How I detest these vacationers. . . ." A fox terrier, a plump old bitch, was trotting along the path after her owner. You adored dogs. The little animal crawled up to us on its belly, wriggling, its ears laid back. It rolled over under your proffered hand, showing its pink underbelly, covered with gray maplike spots. "Why, you sweetheart," you said with your special, petting-ruffling voice.

The fox terrier, having rolled around for a while, gave a dainty little squeal and trotted on, scuttling across the ditch.

When we were already approaching the low park gate, you decided you wanted to smoke, but, after rummaging in your handbag, you softly clucked, "How silly of me. I left the holder at his place." You touched my shoulder. "Dearest, run and fetch it. Otherwise I cannot smoke." I laughed as I kissed your fluttery eyelashes and your narrow smile.

You cried out after me, "Just hurry!" I set off at a run, not because there was any great rush but because everything around me was running—the iridescence of the bushes, the shadows of the clouds on the damp grass, the purplish flowers scurrying for their lives into a gully before the mower's lightning.



"Do you think it's an accident of history that Freemasons live in houses and we live in trees?"

• •

SOME ten minutes later, panting hotly, I was climbing the steps to the schoolhouse. I banged on the brown door with my fist. A mattress spring squeaked inside. I turned the handle, but the door was locked. "Who's there?" came Pal Palych's flustered voice.

I shouted, "Come on, let me in!" The mattress clinked again, and there was a slapping of unshod feet. "What do you lock yourself in for, Pal Palych?" I noticed right away that his eyes were red.

"Come in, come in. . . . Glad to see you. You see, I was asleep. Come on in."

"We forgot a cigarette holder here," I said, trying not to look at him.

We finally found the green enamelled tube under the armchair. I stuck it in my pocket. Pal Palych was trumpeting into his handkerchief.

"She's a wonderful person," he said inopportunely, sitting down heavily on the bed. He sighed and looked askance. "There's something about a Russian woman, a certain—" He got all wrinkled up and rubbed his brow. "A certain"—he emitted a gentle grunt—"spirit of self-sacrifice. There is nothing more sublime in the world. That extraordinarily subtle, extraordinarily sublime spirit of self-sacrifice." He joined his hands behind his head and broke into a lyrical smile. "Extraordinarily . . ." He fell silent, then asked, already with a different tone, one that he often used to make me laugh, "And what else do you have to tell me, my friend?"

I felt like giving him a hug, saying something full of warmth, something he needed. "You ought to go for a walk, Pal Palych. Why mope in a stuffy room?"

He gave a dismissive wave. "I've seen all there is to see. You do nothing b-but get all hot out there. . . ." He wiped his puffy eyes and his mustache with a downward motion of his hand. "Maybe tonight I'll go do some fishing." The pimplelike mole on his wrinkled eyelid twitched.

One ought to have asked him, "Dear Pal Palych, why were you lying down just now with your face buried in the pillow? Is it just hay fever, or some major grief? Have you ever loved a woman? And why cry on a day like this, with this nice sunshine and the puddles outside? . . ."

"Well, I have to run, Pal Palych," I said, glancing at the abandoned glasses, the typographically re-created Tolstoy, and the boots with earlike loops under the table.

Two flies settled on the red floor. One climbed on top of the other. They buzzed and flew apart.

"No hard feelings," Pal Palych said with a slow exhalation. He shook his head. "I'll grin and bear it—go, don't let me keep you."

I WAS running again along the path, next to the alder bushes. I felt that I had bathed in another's grief, that I was radiant with his tears. The feeling was a happy one, which I have since experienced only rarely: at the sight of a bowed tree, a pierced glove, a horse's eye. It was happy because it had a harmonious flow. It was happy as any movement or radiance is happy. I had once been splintered into a million beings and objects. Today I am one; tomorrow I shall splinter again. And thus everything in the world decants and modulates. That day I was on the crest of a wave. I knew that all my surroundings were notes of one and the same harmony, knew—secretly—the source and the inevitable resolution of the sounds assembled for an instant, and the new chord that would be engendered by each of the dispersing notes. My soul's musical ear knew and comprehended everything.

YOU met me on the paved section of the garden, by the veranda steps, and your first words were "My husband called from town while I was gone. He's coming on the ten o'clock. Something must have happened. Maybe he's being transferred."

A wagtail, like a blue-gray wind, quickstepped across the sand. A pause, two or three steps, another pause, more steps. The wagtail, the cigarette holder in my hand, your words, the spots of sunlight on your dress. . . . It could not have been otherwise.

"I know what you're thinking," you said, knitting your eyebrows. "You're thinking someone will tell him and so forth. But it makes no difference. . . . You know what I've . . ."

I looked you straight in the face. I looked with all my soul, directly. I collided with you. Your eyes were limpid, as if a pellicle of silken paper had fluttered off them—the kind that sheathes illustrations in precious books. And, for the first time, your voice was limpid, too. "You know what I've decided? Listen. I cannot live without you. That's exactly what I'll tell him. He'll give me a divorce right away. And then, say in the fall, we could . . ."

I interrupted you with my silence. A spot of sunlight slid from your skirt onto the sand as you moved slightly away.

What could I say to you? Could I invoke freedom, captivity, say I did not love you enough? No, that was all wrong.

An instant passed. During that instant, much happened in the world: somewhere a giant steamship went to the bottom, a war was declared, a genius was born. The instant was gone.

"Here's your cigarette holder," I said. "It was under the armchair. And you know, when I went in, Pal Palych must have been . . ."

You said, "Good. Now you may leave." You turned and ran quickly up the steps. You took hold of the glass door's handle, and could not open it right away. It must have been torture for you.

I STOOD in the garden for a while amid the sweetish damp. Then, hands thrust deep into my pockets, I walked along the dappled sand around the house. At the front porch, I found my bicycle. Leaning on the low horns of the handlebar, I rolled off along the park lane. Toads lay here and there. I inadvertently ran over one. *Pop* under the tire. At the end of the lane there was a bench. I leaned the bicycle against a tree trunk and sat down on the invitingly white plank. I thought about how, in the next couple of days, I would get a letter from you, how you would beckon and I would not return. Your house glided into a marvellous, melancholy distance with its winged piano, the dusty volumes of *The Art Review*, the silhouettes in their circular frames. It was delicious losing you. You went off, jerking angularly at the glass door. But a different you departed otherwise, opening your pale eyes under my joyous kisses.

I SAT thus until evening. Midges, as if jerked by invisible threads, darted up and down. Suddenly, somewhere nearby, I became aware of a bright dapple—it was your dress, and you were—

Had not the final vibrations died away? Therefore, I felt uneasy that you were here again, somewhere off to the side, beyond my field of vision, that you were walking, approaching. With an effort, I turned my face. It was not you but that girl with the greenish scarf—remember, the one we ran into? And that fox terrier of hers with its comical belly? . . .

She walked past, through gaps in the foliage, and crossed the little bridge leading to a small kiosk with stained-glass windows. The girl is bored, she is strolling through your park; I shall probably make her acquaintance by and by.

I rose slowly, slowly rode out of the motionless park onto the main road, straight into an enormous sunset, and, on the far side of a curve, overtook a carriage. It was your coachman, Semyon, driving at a walk toward the station. When he saw me, he slowly removed his cap, smoothed the glossy strands on the back of his head, then replaced it. A checkered lap rug lay folded on the seat. An intriguing reflection flashed in the eye of the black gelding. And when, with motionless pedals, I flew downhill toward the river, I saw from the bridge the panama and rounded shoulders of Pal Palych, who was sitting below on a projection of the bathing booth, with a fishing rod in his fist.

I braked, and stopped with my hand on the railing.

"Hey, hey, Pal Palych! How're they biting?" He looked upward, and gave me a nice, homey kind of wave.

A bat darted above the rose-colored mirror surface. The reflection of the foliage looked like black lace. Pal Palych, from afar, was shouting something, beckoning with his hand. A second Pal Palych quivered in the black ripples. Laughing aloud, I pushed away from the handrail.

I passed the izbas in one soundless sweep along the firmly packed path. Mooing sounds floated past through the lustreless air; some skittles flew up with a clatter. Then, farther along, on the highway, in the vastness of the sunset, amid the faintly vaporous fields, there was silence. ◆

(Berlin, September, 1923. Translated, from the Russian, by Dmitri Nabokov.)

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BOOKS

LIGHT AND SHADOWS

A candid biography of Walker Evans.

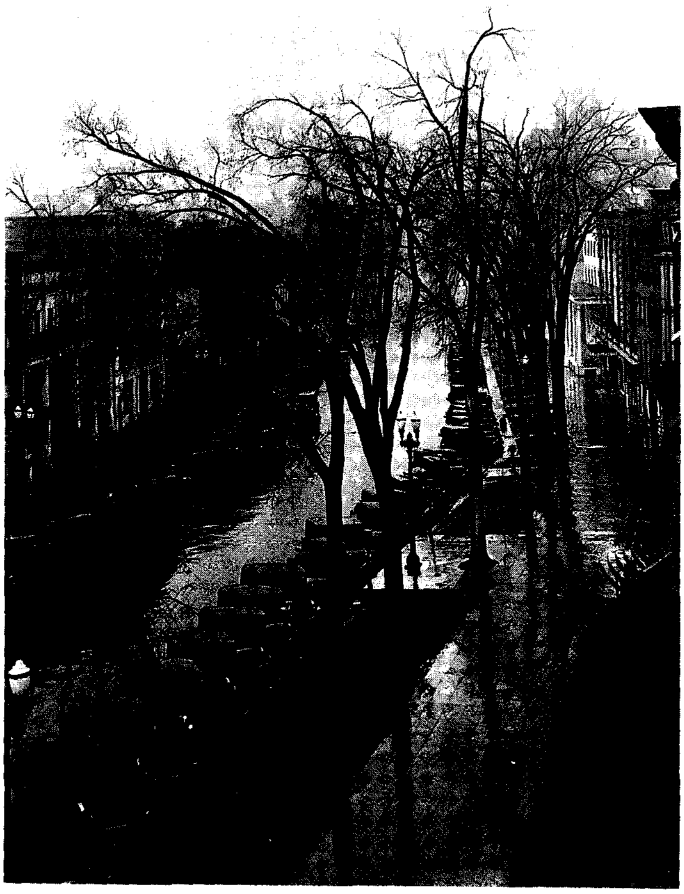
BY MARY HAWTHORNE

WRITING in Lincoln Kirstein's journal, *Hound & Horn*, in 1931, Walker Evans ventured an analysis of the mysterious hold of the photographs of Eugène Atget:

> It is possible to read into his photographs so many things he may never have formulated to himself. . . . His general note is lyrical understanding of the street, trained observation of it, special feeling for patina, eye for revealing detail, over all of which is thrown a poetry which is not "the poetry of the street" or "the poetry of Paris," but the projection of Atget's person.

An apt interpretation of the work of a photographer who profoundly influenced Evans, it could almost serve as a succinct formulation of the "documentary style" of Evans himself, one of the most celebrated American photographers of the century. We know something of Atget—that he came to his subject, the city of Paris, late, that he tended it steadfastly and long, and that he left it old and unrecognized. As for Evans, Belinda Rathbone's engaging new book, "Walker Evans" (Houghton Mifflin; $27.50)—surprisingly, the first biography of him to be published—succeeds in piquing our curiosity about him if not altogether in satisfying it.

Like Atget, Evans took pictures until his death (he died in 1975, at the age of seventy-one), but his reputation rests on a singular body of work completed before he was forty: "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men," a selection of photographs of tenant-farmer families in Alabama during the Depression, which accompanied text by James Agee; "American Photographs," a book of vernacular American life published in 1938; and "Many Are Called," a collection of portraits taken in the New York subway around the same time but not published for some twenty-five years. The fact that the photographs in "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men" have, perhaps more than those of any other photographer, come to define our visual sense of the Depression bespeaks Evans' enormous importance. But it is really the two other books that, in their projection of the complex reticence of his "person," afford access to the almost imperceptible poetry of his vision—a vision that has influenced numberless photographers, most notably Robert Frank, who used "American Photographs" to stunning paradigmatic effect in his book "The Americans" (1959).



Evans' "Main Street, Saratoga Springs, New York, 1931."

Virtually every photograph of Evans' is a conundrum of meaning: beyond its ostensible subject, it reveals nothing—and anything the viewer cares to bring to it. More than any other single quality, it is this absence of fixed expression that accounts for the durability and, oddly, the authority of Evans' work. The photographs of tenant farmers, which were made on assignment for *Fortune* (but never published there), have alternately moved and rankled viewers for decades: Did Evans lend dignity to his subjects or, by the very act of photographing them in their impoverishment, rob them of it? Did his photographs of the Shaker-like interiors of the Burroughs house aestheticize the family's poverty or testify to their valiant effort to transcend it? As for the famous portrait in "American Photographs" of Allie Mae Burroughs, beyond its extraordinary surface, what does her face—as ambiguous in its way as Leonardo's "Mona Lisa"—actually express?

In contrast to the collaborative approach Evans used in rendering her portrait, his photographs of random subway riders were taken without their knowledge, by means of a camera hidden inside his coat. Yet their expressions of vacant contemplation are equally mesmerizing in their illegibility—and are the nearest emotional equivalent of the dislocation and obscure suffering elicited in his pictures of churches and shanties and the Main Streets of small towns. On being asked whether it was possible for the camera to lie, Evans said, "It certainly is. It almost always does."

EVANS' own relationship to the truth seems to have been a complicated one. He once claimed to have come from Boston and to be descended from the Adamses; in fact, he was born in St. Louis, the son of an advertising executive—something he was rather ashamed of. Indulged if not unreservedly loved, he grew up, with an older sister, in a chilly household, first in Kenilworth, an affluent suburb of Chicago, and then in Toledo, where his parents' marriage fell apart when he was in his early teens. In the aftermath, he was shunted off to a series of boarding schools, where he performed indifferently and withdrew into his own world. But by his senior year, at Andover, he had managed to climb out of the well of his unhappiness, possibly through the act of re-creating himself. He emerged an eccentric dandy—a persona he cultivated for the rest of his life. That year, 1922, his schoolmates voted him one of the vainest boys in the class.

The seeds of Evans' aesthetic sensibility were sown in the library of Williams College (he dropped out after his freshman year), where, falling under the spell of the avant-garde, he became what he later called "a pathological bibliophile," and in Paris, where he spent a year, hoping to become a writer. But they did not root until his return to New York, the following year, 1927, when he took up photography seriously—he was largely self-taught—and became a part of what now seems an impossibly small, generous, and accessible artistic community. His friends included Hart Crane, who selected Evans' photographs to accompany the first edition of his book "The Bridge"; Ralph Steiner, who was so moved by Evans' photographic promise that he gave him one of his 8 x 10 view cameras; Berenice Abbott, who introduced Evans to the pictures of Atget and helped him polish his darkroom technique; and Lincoln Kirstein, whose passionate belief in Evans took the form of a Napoleonic campaign to promote him, and whose effect on Evans' career is incalculable. This association is one of the most interesting chapters of Evans' life as well as of Rathbone's book, and she maps the genealogical tree of Kirstein's influence in revealing detail. It was Kirstein who published Evans' early photographs in *Hound & Horn;* who gave him a job photographing Victorian architecture; and whose Harvard classmates Tom Mabry and John Becker owned a gallery, where Evans had his first New York show. But, above all, it was Kirstein's relationship with the Museum of Modern Art that led to Evans' rise to prominence. The museum opened in 1929, with a staff of five. Alfred Barr, who had been Kirstein's tutor at Harvard, was appointed its director, and Kirstein was invited to serve on its first advisory council; Evans was quickly assimilated into Barr's tiny coterie.

One is relieved to learn that Kirstein apparently had nothing to do with Evans' appointment to the Resettlement Administration (later renamed the Farm Security Administration), where he worked as a photographer for the Historical Section between 1935 and 1937. Though projects seem to have been handed to Evans by Kirstein and others, and though Rathbone makes much of Evans' passive temperament, she also makes clear his adamant insistence on freedom from institutional or personal interference in his work—a crucial point to stress in the case of someone whose greatest pictures originated with an assignment. Then again "assignment" here could almost read "grant." In his tenure with the F.S.A., Evans travelled up and down the eastern United States at essentially his own pace, photographing whatever he felt like photographing. Ansel Adams once complained to Roy Stryker, the head of the Historical Section, that he had hired not photographers but "a bunch of sociologists with cameras." To Evans, however, the idea of using the camera for purposes of propaganda was repugnant. The emotional manipulations of Margaret Bourke-White horrified him. He used an 8 x 10 view camera (the only F.S.A. photographer to do so), which required lengthy setup time. And he was famously particular about the light; if it wasn't perfect, he would wait, or come back another day. Faced with budget cuts, Stryker fired him for, among other things, not producing enough.

But it may have been that his dismissal worked to his advantage. In 1938, while MOMA was preparing to move to its present site, Kirstein and Mabry (who had by then made his way to the museum) hastily arranged for a retrospective of Evans' work in the museum's temporary quarters, in the underground concourse of Rockefeller Center, looking out onto the skating rink. Mabry proceeded to mount a campaign that is a lesson in public relations; it succeeded—thanks, largely, to the coincident publication of "American Photographs"—in establishing Evans as a photographer of note.

TWO-THIRDS of the way through "Walker Evans," Rathbone remarks upon a glaring gap in Evans' chronology:

> In the eight years between leaving the F.S.A. and joining *Fortune*, he had devoted himself almost entirely to the organization of his work rather than to its production, to dreaming up projects but not to realizing them. In so doing he had lost track of the pulse of his talent; the driving force had deserted him under the pressure of making a living and the surrender of unrealized ideas.

The photographs of "Many Are Called" notwithstanding, Rathbone utters a painful truth. To all intents and purposes, Evans' career as a serious photographer did come to a close during the Second World War, when he went to work as a substitute cultural critic for *Time*. He worked there from 1943 to 1945, and thereafter worked as a photographer and photo editor for *Fortune*, where he remained for twenty years. He married in 1941, and again in 1960. Both marriages ended in divorce; neither produced children. (In the fourteen years of his first marriage, to the painter Jane Smith Ninas, he managed to never once meet her parents; she claimed that, in the end, Evans "destroyed" her.) Though he was given significant editorial control at *Fortune*, he did not find fulfillment working there and generated, with a few notable exceptions, atrophied, packaged versions of the ambitious vision he had articulated as a young man: "I want to get in some dirty cracks. . . . the street smell, the hateful stuff, women's clubs, fake culture, bad education, religion in decay." He betrayed his artistic worry and growing estrangement from himself in typical ways, becoming bibulous and promiscuous and neurotically attentive to the details of his appearance. While he was living in a tenement with the bathtub in the kitchen, his paycheck went toward velvet slippers from J. Press and handmade waxed-calf shoes from Peal; a medical loan from *Fortune* was used to buy a secondhand Jaguar. He turned his attention outward rather than inward, cultivating the wealthy and the socially prominent. He was tremendously well liked. It is all very sad.

The picture of Evans that Rathbone paints recalls Balzac's vivid portrait of Wenceslas Steinbock, the gifted sculptor in "Cousin Bette," whose sensuality, love of comfort, and fascination with society overwhelm his tenuous artistic will. "These demi-artists are, for the most part, charming people," Balzac writes. "The world delights in them, and turns their heads with adulation. They appear superior to real artists, who are taxed with aloofness, unsociability, rebellion against the conventions and civilized living; because great men belong to their creations." How lovely if Evans had, as he professed to his first wife, "never been faithful to anything but my negatives." Instead, he became, like Steinbock, someone who "maintained his reputation as a great artist, in the eyes of the social world, by his conversation, his critical disquisitions." But the fact is that Evans was no "demiartist"—he was one of the real ones who become trapped in the airless, windowless room of early success. Rathbone demonstrates Evans' clever ability to recycle that success, and the sense of entitlement it instilled in him, but she does not register its inevitable nagging torment or the complexity of his feelings toward it. The Atgets of the world, in their indifference to its opinion, in their simple, unremitting devotion to their subjects, which both anchors their identity and confirms their authenticity, begin to seem like the lucky ones. Remembering Agee a decade after his death, Evans wrote to an old colleague at *Time*, "Il faut pleurer, so much wasted, lost, before used properly. Well what is proper. Maybe what happens is proper."

By the end of Evans' life, his stature, as a result of a 1971 retrospective at MOMA, was immense. At the same time, he was living alone, on a pension from Time, Inc., of around eight thousand dollars, and the annual proceeds from print sales of his photographs, which brought a couple of thousand dollars more. (To Evans' fury, a muddy edition of his F.S.A. work was published in 1973, without his consent; it included instructions for ordering prints from the Library of Congress for as little as five dollars apiece.) In the summer of 1974, however, less than a year before Evans' death, a young photographer who was helping him organize his chaotic archives introduced him to a dealer, who offered him a hundred thousand dollars for his entire photographic estate—about fifty-five hundred prints—and, later, an additional fifty thousand dollars for his entire archive of negatives. Evans, marvelling at the sum—indeed, at this expression of his worth—accepted with childish glee. But in September, when the dealer arrived at his home to collect his purchase, Evans was struck with the realization of what he had done. In a state of helpless agitation, he stood by snapping Polaroids as he watched the remainder of his life's work, which filled fifty archival boxes, being loaded into the trunk and back seat of a Rolls-Royce and driven away. "Stare," Evans had written in a draft text that was to accompany his subway portraits but was never published. "It is the way to educate your eye, and more. Stare, pry, listen, eavesdrop. Die knowing something. You are not here long." ♦

CHICKEN SUPREME

The Rehnquist Court is political in every way.

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

James F. Simon

THE opening sentence of James F. Simon's new book on the Supreme Court, "The Center Holds" (Simon & Schuster; $25), is simple and portentous: "This is the story of a conservative judicial revolution that failed." Simon's exploration of the Supreme Court in the years leading up to Bill Clinton's Presidency is an elaboration of this boldly stated thesis. According to Simon, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and his colleagues on the right hoped to reverse the liberal precedent of the Supreme Court under Chief Justices Earl Warren and Warren Burger, and though, in Simon's view, they couldn't quite pull it off, "it was a very close call." The book is a detailed and often fascinating picture of the Court, full of backstage anecdotes about the too little examined inner workings of this crucial part of our government.

"The Center Holds" is also, in my view, dead wrong—or, at least, wildly premature in its burial of the Rehnquist agenda. The Court's recently completed 1994 term (which, in fairness, came after the period that Simon studied) showed its right wing in exceptionally fine fettle. Indeed, the Rehnquist wing was sufficiently emboldened to turn over the soil

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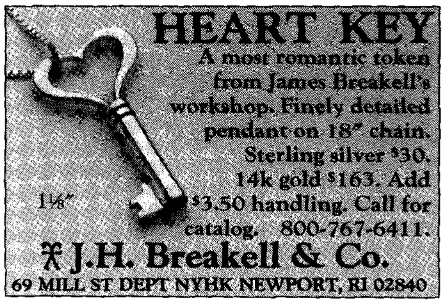

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VILLE ET VILLAGE

on constitutional terrain that had lain fallow for decades. In United States v. Lopez, for the first time since the New Deal a majority of the Court said that Congress had overstepped its constitutional authority under the commerce clause—the source of the legislature's power to pass most laws—when it banned the possession of handguns near schools. And though the Court did void state laws imposing congressional term limits, the four conservatives who dissented proposed a radical reorientation of governmental power away from the federal government and toward the states. Since his days as a law clerk on the Court, in 1952, Rehnquist has remained remarkably consistent in his judicial philosophy—a sort of ad-hoc authoritarianism that favors official authority over individual rights, and corporate prerogatives over government regulation. Now, in the autumn of the Chief's judicial career, it appears that Rehnquist and his conservative colleagues don't just want to turn the clock back to the days before Earl Warren; they're hankering, it seems, for the Articles of Confederation—and they're just one vote away.

Simon, formerly a reporter for *Time* and now a professor at New York Law School, is clearly an admirer of the Court's ghostly liberal wing, and the reason for his rather cheery take on the Rehnquist Court seems evident: it's the way the Court has handled the abortion issue. For many Americans, the struggle over abortion has defined the Supreme Court for the past two decades. And even though Republican Presidents made ten consecutive appointments to the Court before Clinton named Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer, women still retain a constitutional right to end their pregnancies. At the heart of Simon's book, then, is the epochal abortion decision of 1992—Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey.

When Casey came before the Court, it looked as if it would be the final nail in the coffin of Roe v. Wade. Rehnquist, Byron White, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas were sure votes to overturn that 1973 decision; Harry Blackmun and John Paul Stevens would uphold it. The three swing votes—Sandra Day O'Connor, Anthony Kennedy, and David Souter—had all expressed reservations about Roe, and Kennedy was actually on record as opposing it. Yet, ultimately, not one of the trio could pull the trigger. As Simon tells the story, shortly after the case was argued O'Connor, Kennedy, and Souter met in a secret rump session to plan a compromise opinion that would preserve the core of Roe while allowing some restrictions on abortion, like mandatory waiting periods. Their joint effort became one of the strangest opinions in the history of the Court, particularly the well-known passage in which they asserted, "A decision to overrule Roe's essential holding under the existing circumstances would address error, if error there was, at the cost of both profound and unnecessary damage to the Court's legitimacy and to the nation's commitment to the rule of law." The three Justices don't come out and say that Roe was correctly decided. Instead, they admit rather meekly that they are endorsing Roe because they can't take the political heat for overturning it. It's tough to disagree with Rehnquist's characterization of their effort as making Roe "a sort of judicial Potemkin village."

On one level, the decision in Casey would seem to support Simon's thesis: upholding Roe is a more "liberal" result than overturning it. But what is striking about the Casey story is how nakedly political the Court appears—and how much the swing Justices want to remain followers, not leaders, in our national political debates. O'Connor, Kennedy, and Souter, their eyes set firmly on the great middle of American political life, would never upset the uneasy national consensus in favor of legal abortion.

What Simon did not anticipate (who did?) was the Republican landslide of 1994 and the rightward shift of American politics. Once more, the Justices have fallen smartly in step with the voters. What is remarkable about the Court's 1994 term is how closely the issues raised by the Rehnquist wing hew to the Contract with America—particularly the efforts to end affirmative action and return governmental power to the states. (The ascendant Republicans in Congress, no less astute politicians than the Court's swing Justices, have likewise downplayed the fight to end abortion.) The days are long gone when such a towering figure as Earl Warren could sound a moral clarion like Brown v. Board of Education in the middle of the apathetic nineteen-fifties. These are fingers-to-the-wind days for the Justices. And in the Supreme Court of Newt Gingrich's Washington, the center hasn't held; it has moved. ♦

RECOMMENDED READING

Wild Game

by Frank Bergon
(Nevada; $22)

A Nevada wildlife biologist, Jack Irigaray, accompanies a game-warden friend who is rounding up a poacher so in love with killing that he turns his rifle on them. Jack survives, but not intact. The murderer is lionized as the free-spirited last of a breed, while Jack, in grief and despair, descends into alcoholism. Loosely based on fact, this novel, which starts as an eco-thriller, takes unexpected turns that are all too distressingly true to life.

Giant Bluefin

by Douglas Whynott
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $21)

Thunnus thynnus—"the rushingest of the rushing"—is commonly known as the bluefin tuna; it's the largest of all finfish, the most migratory, and among the fastest (its tail fin oscillates like a hummingbird's wings). It's also the most valuable, especially in Japan, where the meat, called *maguro*, can set you back seventy-five dollars a serving. Whynott's superb report on the bluefin harpoon fishery takes readers to the old whaling grounds off Cape Cod and shows that the adventure and controversy associated with that extinct American industry survive today, on boats with names like Scratcher, Back Off, and Tenacious.

Reflections of Eden: My Years with the Orangutans of Borneo

by Biruté M. F. Galdikas
(Little, Brown; $24.95)

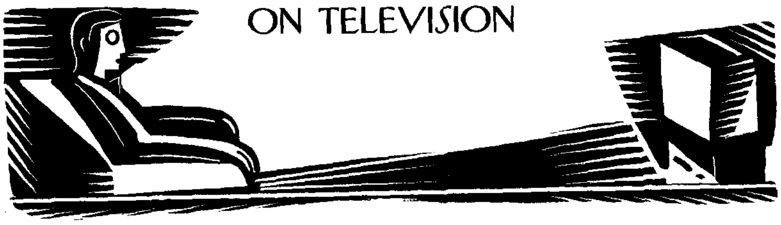
Like Jane Goodall and the late Dian Fossey, the author of this enthralling memoir was given her start by Louis Leakey, whom she met at U.C.L.A., where she was a graduate student. With his blessing—and financial backing he scared up—she arrived in the Borneo rain forest in 1971 to study wild orangutans, then the least well known of the great apes. Thanks to her work and the work of others, who joined her, we now understand a great deal more about these animals. Her beautifully written account shows both the pleasures and the value of making a connection with another species.

Kayaking the Vermilion Sea

by Jonathan Waterman
(Simon & Schuster; $22)

Waterman, who has written about and filmed mountain climbing, decided on a change of scenery, and he and his wife set out in a pair of kayaks to travel the Gulf of California (also known as the Vermilion Sea). On their arduous journey, they found that—despite the ecological depredations of tourism and the fishing industry—yellow-bellied sea snakes, needlefish, poisonous plankton, killer whales, and sixty-one species of scorpion are all flourishing. The reader gains renewed appreciation of the pleasures of armchair travel.

ON TELEVISION



WHO'S LAUGHING NOW?

After the eighties boom, comedy downsizes and goes alternative.

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

IS standup comedy dead on its feet? According to recent reports in *New York* and the Washington *Post*, once-bustling comedy clubs resemble the mouths of abandoned mine shafts. It's desolate inside their doors, the laughter is thin and lonely. Where'd everybody go? "Comedy is the rock of the eighties" was the boast of that decade—not an absurd claim given that flamethrowers like Sam Kinison and Andrew Dice Clay were filling arenas and enjoying the raucous adulation once reserved for guitar gods. Where Lenny Bruce aspired to jazz virtuosity, Kinison and Clay strove for heavy-metal hegemony, hitting their punch lines like power chords. And club comics required a lot less upkeep than the average rock band: they didn't need piles of amplifiers, tedious sound checks, and numerous backstage amenities (blow jobs, etc.) to keep them operational. Owners got wise to how easy it was to raise gerbils. In the eighties, it seemed, every building with a liquor license stuck a microphone in front of a brick wall and called itself a comedy club. These new venues sported cute names like Giggles, Yuk-Yuks, the Funny Bone, the Laff Trak, and Stitches. The more established spots, like Caroline's and the Improv, became the sites of cable standup showcases (which are still shown in endless repeats). Comics also hit the college circuit. But, to paraphrase Kingsley Amis, More means Worse. The product became diluted as too many peppy faces rolled off the assembly line with their eight-by-ten glossies, and the club boom proved a boon for mediocrity. The élite talents stuck to movies (Robin Williams, Eddie Murphy, Michael Keaton), landed their own sitcoms (Roseanne Barr, Jerry Seinfeld, Brett Butler, Garry Shandling, Martin Lawrence, Tim Allen), frazzled themselves frail (Richard Pryor), or met their deaths (Andy Kaufman, Kinison), leaving the B-squad players to line up against the brick wall. The audience also dwindled: the mobs of yuppies that once hunched over drink-filled tables began nesting at home, treating themselves to Blockbuster nights. Gradually, as the club scene has lost its flash, pockets of "alternative" comedy have popped up in places like Rebar, the downtown-Manhattan hangout that offers weekly workshops where novice and pro standups take practice cuts at new material. (They're like poetry jams, with a lot less posturing.)

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

Television, too, is flirting with alternatives. This summer, cable's Comedy Central is staging standup in unorthodox formats in an attempt to revive it. The results are spotty, as results often are. A mere distraction called "Comedy del Sol," hosted by Richard Jeni (the star of the really bad sitcom "Platypus Man"), is taped on the beach in Santa Monica, which has proved to be a mistake. Standup comedy needs the contained energy of a nocturnal pit in which to feed and free-associate. It thrives in strip joints and night clubs, where money and sex provide extra friction. As "Comedy del Sol" demonstrates, humor dissipates in an alfresco environment friendly to Frisbee-tossing and watching the sunset: whatever, man. By contrast, "The Real Deal," which plunks five top comics—Allan Havey, Robert Wuhl, Kevin Pollak, John Mendoza, and John Caponera—around a poker table in Lake Tahoe, couldn't be more of a sealed crate, its crew of smart mouths jousting for bragging rights as they swap jokes and compete for real money. The jokes they tell—too long to repeat and raunchy enough to turn Philip Roth pink—involve parrots, penis implants, and basic infidelity. Comedy is delivered in such abstract shorthand today that it's easy to forget the structural pleasures of the "Bolero" buildup, the incidental detail, and the payoff of a traditional joke. The body English these pros put into their jokes, even while sitting down, suggests the avid zeal of pool hustlers anticipating the carom. "The Real Deal" also features very funny impressions, such as Robert Wuhl's Broderick Crawford of "Highway Patrol" attempting a standup act—"Two Jews walk into a bar, *gimme a big ten-four!*" This riff session of guy humor achieves a retro Rat Pack/Cassavetes-cast squad-house camaraderie as the comics scatter chips and flirt with the cocktail waitress (it's like eavesdropping on the rough draft of a David Mamet play), but there's too much self-conscious jabber and awkward camera work once they get over the humps of their best stories. It's an experiment worth repeating, with a different set of guys.

The most self-consciously alternative series is "Comedy Product," hosted and co-produced by Janeane Garofalo, who's an odd duck. A pie-faced comic actress—she appeared in "Reality Bites," endured a dismal season on "Saturday Night Live," plays a talent booker on "The Larry Sanders Show," and has joined Michael Moore's mischief-makers on "TV Nation"—Garofalo has a full platter of what might be called self-image issues. She is, in short, her own biggest bringdown. Her production company is called I Hate Myself, and that sentiment is expanded upon in her introductory remarks: "I smell bad, as a rule. . . . And I think that it's because I hate myself so much that the odor comes from the inside and just goes out, and it's like kind of humus meets vinyl, just pours off of me, and it's just the stench of utter defeat and unrealized goals. And with that, let me bring on your first act." Try following that, Tonto.

The format for "Comedy Product" is modelled on the workshops at Rebar, where the comics perform in an informal setting, sometimes pausing to consult their notes, which are always crumpled, for that authentic creative look. At both places, the comics who fall flat are the slackers who come so unprepared that their faces appear sleep-lined, as if they had arrived late for class with their mouths full of lint. They tend to meander. It's one thing to perform new material; it's another thing to perform no material. Some comedians not only make a personal impression but poke fun at the very concept of alternative comedy. Andy Kindler, for example, has a helpful suggestion: "A lot of people want to know how can we make this alternative comedy more popular, and my theory is, Make it more mainstream—that's my theory right there. Alternative comedy means talking about yourself. 'I woke up today and I read the paper and forget-about-it, right?' " The curly-haired Kindler is a tight-wound comic with a well-developed persecution complex. His humor is based on his own imbalance; he's so touchy that the least little remark makes him emphatic. On being warned by a commercial director not to be "shticky," he says, "You know how I hear that? 'I hate the *Jews*,' that's how I hear that. 'You are a *Jewy* Jew Jew. I hate you, Jew.' Nobody hates the Jews more than the Jews, though, I'll tell you that." A Pez dispenser of passive aggression (he and Garofalo are soul mates), Kindler fantasizes about starring in his own Jean-Claude Van Damme-style action vehicle, pointing his finger at the camera and issuing such macho threats as "Don't get in Andy's way, unless you're willing to play the role of caretaker" and "If you're gonna hang out with Andy, bring a sweater—'cause it's gonna get *chilly*."

Comedy Central doesn't have a monopoly on the new standups. The top cat of the alternative scene in Manhattan is Marc Maron, who performs regularly at Rebar and will headline his own special on HBO on September 7th. Unlike the typical alternative comic, Maron doesn't content himself with hovering over the morning paper; he incarnates the news. He's that New York specialty—the well-informed wise guy. Dressed in black, and sporting John Lennon granny glasses and sideburns, Maron looks more like a seventies protest singer than like a standup; pretending to be stoned onstage, he does a Mr. Natural cakewalk, his eyes glinty with pothead greed. His HBO special, taped at San Francisco's Fillmore Auditorium, leans heavily toward the hippie-yippie left, literally flipping the middle finger at Rush Limbaugh, Newt Gingrich, and the Christian Coalition. "Fuckin' crazy-ass Republicans," he thinks aloud. Like Kindler, he also explodes Jewish stereotypes from the inside: "The great thing about being Jewish is that we got all the money—all of it—and we run the media. I'm surprised I have time to do this [gig]." In his tendentious moments, though, he often hammers his points too hard, as if trying to ring the bell at the county fair. His humor works better in looser imaginative sorties, such as his agnostic take on the information superhighway. His theory of the paradigm shift is that we're moving out of a "petroleum-based phallic era," defined by missiles and hardware, "into an information-based scrotal era." Ergo, "it's not about big cocks, it's about information storage—it's about big balls." Since, as Maron notes, no woman has ever been heard to moan in breathy admiration, "Wow, that's a lot of memory," techno geeks will have to invent their own play doll. The day isn't far off when science will create "a fuckable computer": "Imagine walking in on somebody and they got virtual-reality glasses on, some sort of weird keyboard, and this genital mitt. 'Hey, get outta here, son, Daddy's working!' " In the meantime, he has a friend who spends eight hours a day playing video games with some guy in France. When his friend says, "The computer's a tool," Maron replies, "No, the computer's a toy—*you're* a tool. It's using you to get to me."

COMICS like Maron are right to resist surfing the Third Wave. Surrendering to technology nullifies their unique impact. At Rebar, you sometimes see comics consulting material stored on their PowerBooks before they take their turn, and comics will no doubt be doing their acts in cyberspace cabarets. But without the sweaty urgency of the comic, the contorted Kabuki faces concealing a sniper's eye, the hint of sacrificial flesh, the words might as well come by Western Union. The brick walls of the classic comedy club served as a reminder that every comic who takes the stage faces a potential firing squad. This risk of public rejection gives comedy its existential edge, even to comics who perform by rote. The attitude of the ringside cynic is, Anybody can be funny—what makes you special? Unable to formulate a gut response, a lot of the younger standups seem to be abdicating their bodies and marketing themselves as mild antidepressants—shying away from the effort of imposing too much, in a period double-glazed with irony and deadpan cool. They're so depersonalized that they're already half adrift in cyberspace. They'll be the ones wiped off the slate when the next rebound in comedy occurs. And it will. Watching these programs, you feel that, although the current scene may be directionless, the best comics—Maron, Kindler, the poker buddies on "The Real Deal," even Garofalo (when she isn't acting skanky)—haven't lost their drive or their killer instinct. There's no dearth of talent. Standup comedy in the nineties is suffering from a case of charisma deficiency. Andrew Dice Clay had more charisma than these guys, and he wasn't even that good! As if to atone for his trespasses, Andrew Clay—he's dropped the "Diceman" moniker and attitude—is starring in his own CBS sitcom this fall, playing a lovable lug. Quite a comedown for a man who would be king. ♦

BLOCK THAT METAPHOR!

[*From the Times*]

Joyce Ebert finds the bovine resilience in Archie's clinging, gin-soaked wife as well as a lovely, tattered coquettishness, though she can overmilk the part's pathos.

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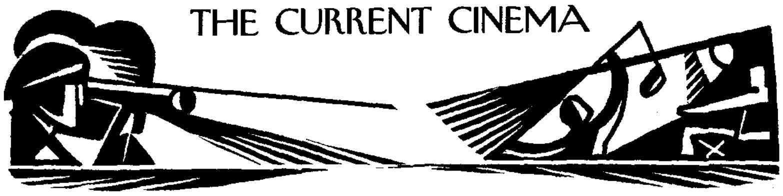


THE CURRENT CINEMA

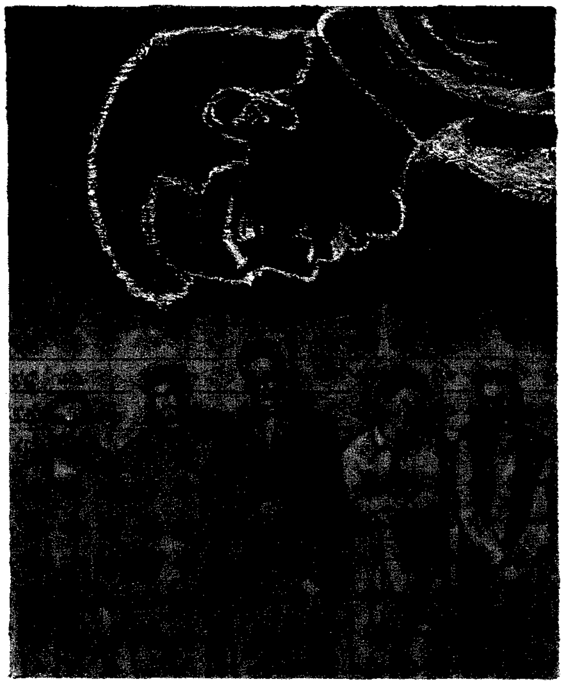
THE BIG ROUNDUP

Paranoia strikes deep in Bryan Singer's neo-noir mystery.

BY ANTHONY LANE

“The Usual Suspects” begins in the dark, with the sound of rich, rippling water, and music to match. Up come the words “San Pedro, California—Last Night.” You think, It's all so romantic. Surely that's love in the air? Well, no. As a matter of fact, that's gunfire in the air, followed shortly by a giant fireball blooming upward from an exploding boat. Twenty-seven people are killed. A cargo of cocaine worth ninety-one million dollars is missing, presumed burned. One roasted passenger survives, and he lies in the hospital, babbling about a figure of incomparable evil whom he claims to have sighted at the scene. From here on, the story wades into a swamp of thievery and power plays and language—it all stinks like a fish. *So* romantic.

The movie now jumps back six weeks to New York. The police are investigating a robbery, and a detective named Kujan (Chazz Palminteri) pulls in five suspects for a lineup: Hockney (Kevin Pollak), McManus (Stephen Baldwin), Fenster (Benicio Del Toro), Keaton (Gabriel Byrne), and Kint, nicknamed Verbal (Kevin Spacey). It's a large helping of characters to serve up at once, and the film works hard to bind them into the plot while maintaining them as distinct entities. Keaton, for example, is the suave ex-cop who turned to crime, and Verbal is a creep with a limp, an amateur among pros. As for Fenster, it can be only a matter of time before a spaceship lands to take him back home. Del Toro gives one of the oddest performances seen in American movies in a long while. He doesn't have many speeches, but each gets a spooked laugh out of the audience; it's as if he had learned his lines and then been filmed at the precise moment when he was starting to forget them. His voice has a high, sliding air, a tone that oozes both deep sleaze and complete indifference—perfect for Fenster, who is, after all, only one letter away from being a member of the Addams family.


“The Usual Suspects”: Pollak, Baldwin, Del Toro, Byrne, and Spacey under the watchful eye of Chazz Palminteri.

JAMES BURRIS

Once the five leads are shut up in a room together, the movie really gets going. In other words, they can talk. None of them are charged with the robbery, but during the long hours in a holding cell they have time to get acquainted and plan *another* robbery; everything that follows springs from this brainstorm. “The Usual Suspects” is a

CLOTHESPIN

Light as two grasshopper husks,
Hinged wings,
Mirror image, seesaw,
Picket twin, swallowtail,
Wind foe.

Clatter in the sack
With your sisters—
Clamp cloth on rope in sun.

Cousin to peg,
To wheelbarrow,
To stool, to wagon, to needle and thread.
Cousin to button, to home remedies.
Instrument of the familiar.

The crux in hand, a woman's tool,
Well worn as my feet.

O wood in palm,
Purveyor of order,
The business of carrying on,
The tune whistled under my windowsill.

—Ann Quinn

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violent picture, but it's not a brutal one, because violence is not its first love; violence is simply what happens when people run out of things to say. There are three main bursts of activity—a jewel heist, a shooting in an underground parking lot, and the conflagration on the water in San Pedro—and all of them feel skilled and speedy. But they are mere interruptions of the movie's chief business, which is the trading of lies, rumors, and threats. We soon see why Kint is nicknamed Verbal; as the only suspect who is still alive after the explosion, he is questioned at length about the four others, and much of the film is taken up with his interrogation. Kujan against Verbal, Palminteri versus Spacey: it's a close match, the solemn lawman looming over the gibbering squirmer.

"The Usual Suspects," which opens next week, was written by Christopher McQuarrie and directed by Bryan Singer; it's their second collaboration, following the 1993 "Public Access," and they've developed a fine feel for the exact degree of complexity that a movie can get away with. Time and again, the narrative folds in on itself, and so much is presented in secondhand reports that we gradually forget a golden rule: Never trust a flashback. Just because something is said to have happened—just because it happens before our very eyes—is no guarantee that it did happen. Film noir has always reeked of flashback; pictures like "The Asphalt Jungle" and "The Killing" sought to peel off a central crime layer by layer, as if to show how tightly malice and misfortune were wrapped in fate. Now the tone has shifted: we have "Reservoir Dogs" and "The Usual Suspects"—films that get high, rather than morose, about such convolutions. The wrapping is now more important than the core. Bryan Singer drives his characters toward a definite doom, as John Huston did, but the spinning out of that damnation feels like fun.

The doom derives from one man. Not even from that, perhaps: from a name. "Keyser Söze," rasps the burn victim in the hospital, and the cops around him don't understand what he's saying. Slowly, the words begin to make sense: other people have heard of Söze—the Hungarian warlord who murdered his own children, who came to America, who murders anyone who displeases him, or anyone he pleases. Few have seen his face; nobody knows his mind. The five suspects go quiet whenever he is mentioned, and the cops aren't even sure that he exists. Söze reinforces your suspicion that everything about this movie is a MacGuffin. There are stolen emeralds that don't matter, drugs that can't be found, a villain who's either an alibi or a myth. The film is poised between the sturdy satisfactions of a whodunit—we have to guess which, if any, of the characters will turn out to be Keyser Söze—and the more light-fingered feeling that it's all a game. Crucial facts just wash away; halfway through the action, the theft that started it all—the crime that led to the original lineup—is solved and dismissed with a shrug. Even when Söze's henchman turns up, you don't believe in him. His name is Kobayashi, his complexion looks like a fake tan, his accent lurches between Bombay and South Wales, and he is played by Pete Postlethwaite, last seen as an Irishman in "In the Name of the Father." All of which makes him absurd, yet in some infuriating way Kobayashi suits the swagger and conceit of "The Usual Suspects," its wicked hint that the world is no more than an anthology of tall tales.

Singer's film can be expected to pick up the same audience that trooped to see "Reservoir Dogs." Both works assault your ears, throw your expectations out of whack, glisten with the pleasures of ensemble playing, and demonstrate the useful art of standing your ground and firing two guns at once. "The Usual Suspects," however, doesn't try to ape the Tarantino hipness, and that's probably a good thing. It's largely a nocturnal movie, lacking the splashy colors of "Reservoir Dogs" and "Pulp Fiction," and it's much less cool; people don't saunter around in white shirts and skinny black ties. Singer's men look ugly and scruffy; if there's a weak link in the cast, it's Gabriel Byrne, who is just too fine-boned for this low-rent landscape. (The poor guy was all wrong in "Little Women," too. Jo is supposed to find her soul mate in a plain, chubby scholar; instead, she hooked up with Lord Byron.) What beauty there is in the picture arises from destruction: there's the angelic blurring of light behind Keaton's head as it gets punched by a frustrated cop, and the weird chronology of the explosion at the docks—first, the orange glow of its reflection, and *then* the fireball itself. Most directors would have done it the other way around, but Singer is dealing with a universe where effect is more reliable than cause, and infinitely more seductive.

THE movie finds its perfect pitch when McManus, assuming the role of lonely sharpshooter, gazes through his telescopic sight and makes a quiet count of his distant victims, all of whom will have to be picked off, under the veil of darkness, within a matter of seconds. "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven," he says to himself, like Snow White checking under her duvet for dwarfs. He pauses, gives a little snarl of a laugh, and adds, "Oswald was a fag." What's great about the line, apart from the fact that it will amuse plenty of people who would prefer to be offended by it, is that it feels like the product of energetic concision. You can imagine a whole speech being chopped down to this one, oblique phrase: the dirty wit of it forces the audience to fill in the gaps. McQuarrie's script stays one step ahead of us, or so we believe; in the closing minutes, it becomes clear that we have in fact been trailing ten miles behind. The more movies one watches, the easier it is to spot the planting of a twist; the joy of being outsmarted, therefore, grows more precious by the year. I fell for "The Usual Suspects," as I did for Mamet's "House of Games." I walked out feeling pleased, excited, and very, very stupid.

Singer is so proud of his final twist that he nearly blows it. At the point of revelation, someone drops a mug of coffee, and we see it smash three times (in slow motion, naturally). I'm sure that the director will think back on this and regret it: he doesn't *need* a flourish of style to signal the big moment—it can take care of itself. The movie's confidence sometimes tenses up like this when it could afford to remain casual; real style tends to stroll in unannounced. Still, the twist survives to haunt you, like the charred figure in the California hospital. The film traps its viewers so neatly that the temptation to give away the plot, to share the pain of that trap, is almost too much to bear. Suffice it to say that the dexterity with which the baddie pulls the wool over the eyes of his peers is a blueprint for the way in which the audience gets screwed by the movie. This may be a defining virtue of all good noir, one source of its reputation for infectious paranoia. The notion that we can "identify with" the predicaments of noir heroes is obviously tripe: when did you last perch on top of a rising elevator, kill the lights, and shoot two of its occupants through the brow before they had time to frown? But the currents that render these heroes helpless and suck them under seem to flow out of the screen and along the aisles.

Some people, of course, won't like the sensation at all; they may not want to be manhandled into a corner, to submit to the seedy, masculine bruising that passes for social relations in a movie like "The Usual Suspects." Women can hardly be made out through its dank atmosphere. "I love you," Keaton's girlfriend (Suzy Amis) says to him. There is no reply. "I love you," she repeats, in case he didn't hear her the first time. He heard all right; he just didn't care. Anyone who has overdosed on film noir, however, will recognize the fact that lovelessness is part of the deal. Even the characters who try to make room for love discover that greed has got there first and made itself at home. You could argue, once the effect of "The Usual Suspects" has worn off, that you've seen it all before. That's like cutting your finger and saying you're bored by your own blood; in truth, some things never lose their sting. I certainly don't believe that only movie buffs will enjoy the show; rather, it will leave everyone feeling like a buff—feeling, in other words, that life has started to turn into a movie, and that our actions, whose freedom we take for granted, seem to be following someone else's script. I still haven't figured out exactly what happens in "The Usual Suspects," and I need to see it again, but one thing I know for sure: Keyser Söze rules the world. ◆

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WELCOME TO THE LATEHAMPTONS!

BY BRUCE McCALL

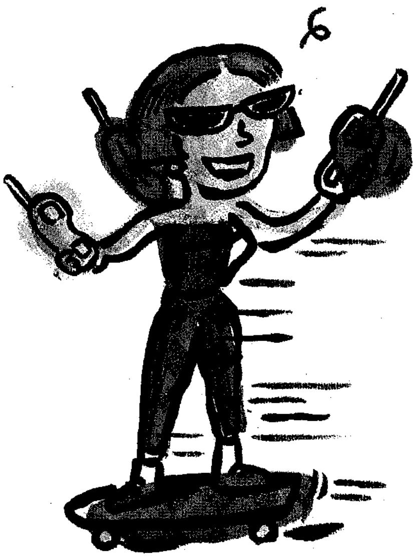
SLYBOOTS, you! You knew that right about now, half the Hamptons summer kingpins would have pulled up stakes and would be in Milan ball-gown shopping for Bohemian Grove; that after June and July all the Rodeo Drive wives would be moaning those Lily Pond Lane blues and pining for brunch at the Ivy; that just about now the Aegean yacht brokers would all start faxing sweetheart charter deals to their A-list clients.

You played chicken with the Julian calendar. You waited. You nerved it out. Well, you win! You're no stranger to the lightning-bug antsiness of the action people. Five weeks, ten dinner parties, seven tennis games, three political fund-raisers, two consecutive rainy days, and—phfft, the whole golden chain of the world's most happening humans is gone, heading west to J.F.K. in a flotilla of chartered-'copter traffic that looks like a remake of "Apocalypse Now," and leaving behind short-circuited house leases, table reservations, and the dreamy, yeasty-yet-creamy-"Waterworld"-drowning-in-black-ink that is the Hamptons—leaving it *for you*, who will scavenge all its lingering lustre between now and Labor Day!

You'll be right there as all those secrets sealed off from the nobodies through June and July come filing out into the open like freed hostages, blinking in the August sun. Such as? Such as Di working checkout at the Bridgehampton I.G.A., and the only one who recognized her all summer was John Paul, but, thinking he was a nut case, she called 911, and who arrived in the cop cruiser? George Plimpton! Who knew? Not "Fox 5 News," not "Hard Copy"—just you!

But why are we standing here jawing? Meet Bobby at the Shinnecock Canal—black Porsche Carrera Turbo, Nevada plates. Bobby shows the houses with remaindered leases to friends of friends, just for fun. Take a Bobby house tour. Solid, Warren-slept-here stuff. Go ahead! Walk right in, look around, stargaze. Won't see: Barbra, Jann, Mort. Might see: Chevy, Sydney Biddle Barrows, Susan Lucci.

And then there's Meretrice, the woman who'll get you the impossible restaurant reservations. You've heard about her—the one with the Eurowaif look who books tables from her cellular phone, on her skateboard, from the shoulder of Highway 27. She can arrange for you to sit where Mickey Rourke would have sat if one of his people hadn't called to cancel. Steven and Jeffrey's table—not outside the realm of possibility. And so on. Be sure to tip her way, way over her fee, because—and this story is so Hamptons, it hurts—Meretrice was born allergic to her parents (world's only known case) and has never, ever experienced a family dinner.



You won't need Meretrice's help to feast on the hottest collectibles of the Hamptons '95 high season. Just show up after closing at the kitchen door around back at Blasé on Twee Lane in East Hampton, where they'll sell you dirty dishes of the stars. Alec Baldwin's pasta primavera plate, still sticky: $1,100. Kim's uneaten Key lime pie: $550. But, believe it, they're willing to haggle as Labor Day draws nigh.

And now you're in on the best-kept fast-food secret in Hamptons history: Snorkeldogs at U-42, the only restaurant in Suffolk County that's been surfacing at 8 P.M. sharp and submerging at midnight since 1943. Only a five-minute rowboat jaunt off Amagansett. Das ist one publicity-shy Boot!

The bar-none finest finger food east of Riverhead? Home-baked wafers served at the weekly Celebrity Sunday Mass at Wee Kirk o' the Virgin in Noyack. Whipped up special by Candace at Let 'Em Eat Cake, in Water Mill. (Candace was partners with Bobby in Bop Till You Drop.)

And don't forget to put the Hundredth Annual Running of the Potato Bugs, down Main Street in Wainscott, on your to-do calendar. A nighttime sporting event like no other. Bring your sneaks—and your Raid! Then pillage the galleries for end-of-season bargains on kelp art, sandcastles, Jackson Pollock key fobs.

So, you there, from East Hairball, N.J., with your Nissan Sentra and your Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt, come right on in. But do it now. Because here's one last Hamptons secret: all those Milanese, Monegasque, multicultural megabuckers—who was it that called them the Septrendies?—come in right after Labor Day. And *that's* when people like you have to get out. ♦

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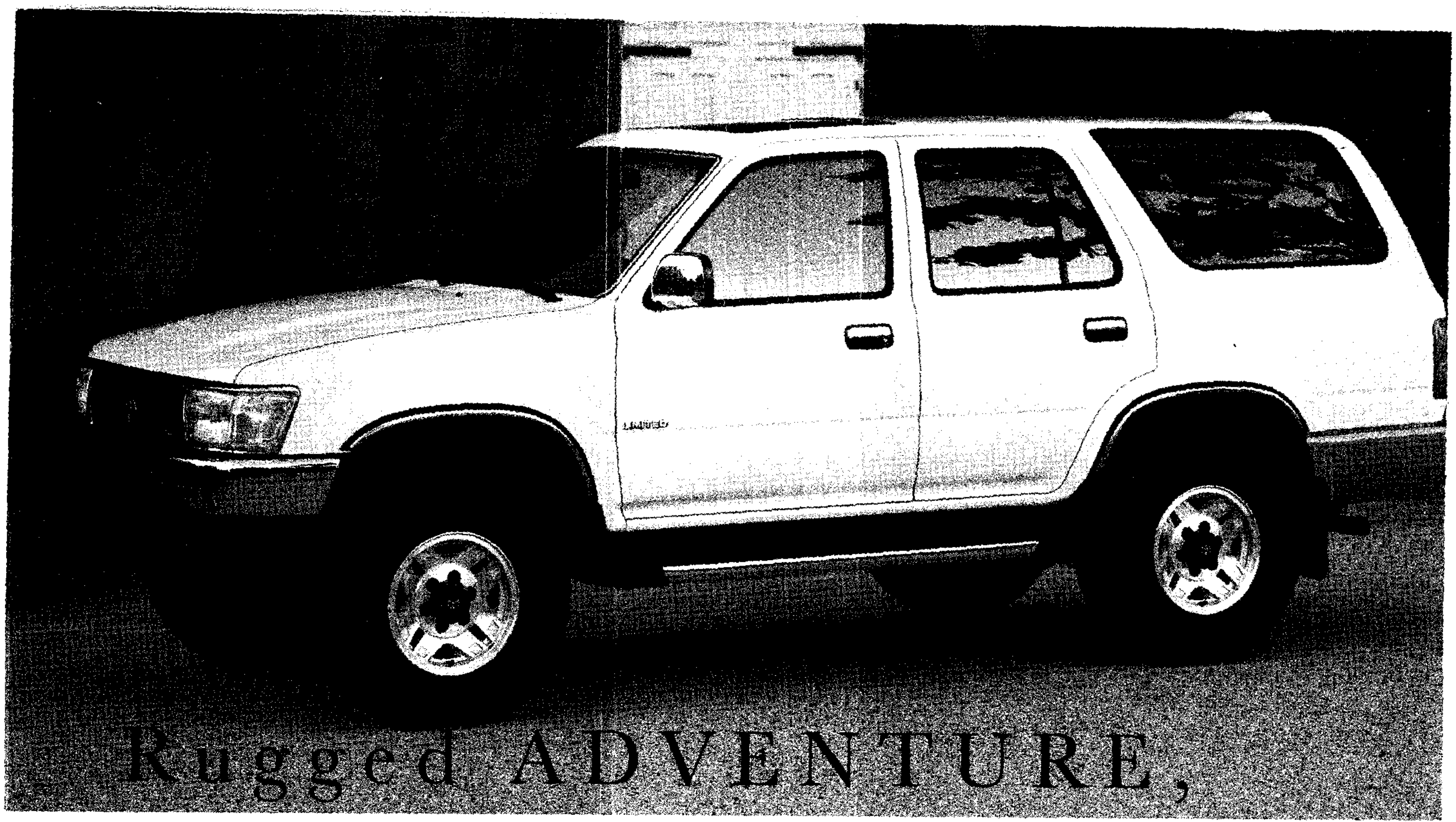

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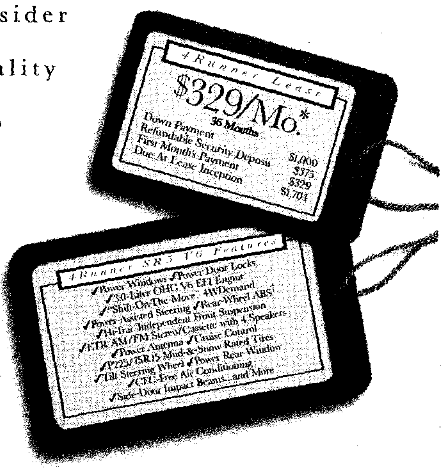
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